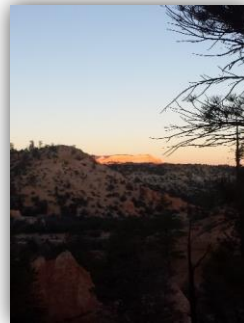


**Recreation Experience Baseline Study Report**  
Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument

***Phase 4: HWY 12 Corridor***



**Final Report**

The Natural Resource Center at Colorado Mesa University

2018

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Disclaimer: The views and conclusions contained in this document are those of the author (Dr. Tim Casey, CMU) and should not be interpreted as representing the opinions or policies of the U.S. Government. Mention of trade names or commercial products does not constitute their endorsement by the U.S. Government.

## Executive Summary

In the fall of 2012, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (GSENM) entered into a five-year assistance agreement with the Natural Resource Center (NRC) at Colorado Mesa University (CMU) in Grand Junction, Colorado to conduct a recreational experience baseline study of the Monument. A recreational baseline study is designed to develop an understanding of the recreational use and demands of a particular location at a particular time to establish a baseline for future planning or projects. This baseline will also serve as a starting point for conversations between the BLM and their partners in the surrounding communities and beyond regarding recreation on GSENM. The study was planned to be conducted in five phases across the approximately 1.9-million-acre monument, beginning in 2013 with the areas accessed by Hole in the Rock Road. The second phase of the study focused on the Grand Staircase study area located on the western third of GSENM and is accessed primarily by Johnson Canyon, Cottonwood and Skutumpah Roads as well as Highway 89 on the southern edge. The third phase focused on the southern portions of GSENM and all of Vermillion Cliffs National Monument (VCNM). Additionally, there are some landscapes in the third phase of the study that are managed by the BLM - Kanab Field Office. This fourth phase of the study focuses on the northern edge of GSENM that is accessed by the Highway 12 corridor. It is the final phase of data collection. A fifth phase of the analysis will consider all four phases together to better understand recreation trends and preferences throughout the Monument. No additional data will be collected for Phase 5. The findings of Phase 5 will be published in the fifth and final report in this project in the fall of 2018.

A mixed methodology focus group, using audience polling in addition to engaging participants in open dialogue, was determined to be the appropriate approach to establish the recreation experience baseline. In this case, a focus group is a structured conversation with a limited number of participants (less than 25) regarding recreation in GSENM and surrounding areas. The small nature of the setting and open-ended nature of the questions allows for a good deal of interaction between the participants and the facilitator, and between the participants themselves. This methodology allows participants to express the subtleties and nuances of what really matters to them about recreating in the area. This mixed methodology approach provides a data set that captures both a complete set of responses from each participant using audience polling technology as well as documents a rich set of notes from the group dialogue that gives context and depth to the polling data. Dr. Tim Casey, a Professor of Political Science at CMU and director of the NRC, was named as the principal investigator to conduct the focus groups and prepare the analytical reports.

A total of 16 focus groups were conducted between March and October 2016 for this fourth phase of the study. Twelve of those focus groups were conducted in person in the towns of Boulder, Torrey and Escalante, Utah, in three separate visits during March, August and October. The remaining four focus groups were conducted digitally via the internet and conference call (these will be referred to throughout this document as "digital focus groups"). There were a total of 104 participants in the 16 focus groups. The participants were allowed to remain anonymous, although their responses were tracked and collated by the use of audience polling technology. Some basic demographic information was collected at the beginning of each session. Participants were asked to provide home zip codes to identify how representative this study was of the overall population. The majority of participants came from zip codes in Utah (71%). Most of those came from Boulder (38.5% of all participants). The next largest group of participants came from

Escalante, Utah (only 9.5% of total participants). In addition to UT residents, participants represented six other states. There were participants from 18 unique zip codes. Participants were also asked to select one affiliation (role) they have in relation to the landscape. Those selections included: visitor, local resident, community leader, outfitter/guide, business owner, other. The majority of the participants selected affiliations associated with the local area: local resident (52%), and community leader (10%). Visitors represented 15% of the total and outfitters/guides made up 10%. Six percent of respondents did not select an affiliation, and 5% chose “other”.

The design of the focus group for data collection entailed a series of discussion questions designed to engage participants in open dialogue about their preferences, interests and expectations regarding recreation so responses could be captured in their own words, followed by a list of choices that represented a spectrum of possible answers to the discussion questions. They could respond to this list of possible responses by selecting them via anonymous audience polling using hand held remote response devices (clickers). The focus group script covered all the major elements needed in planning for recreation on public lands: preferences for outcomes and experiences, interests and expectations, setting characteristics, activities, and the services needed to support the recreation experience.

After analysis of the responses from 104 participants in 16 focus groups over seven months of data collection in 2016, the following observations and suggestions began to emerge regarding the northern area of GSENM. Although in a baseline study, the principal focus is on observations of the setting and context, inevitably some participants expressed their ideas concerning the area as suggestions for future action. These were not solicited in the study but are recorded as part of the response given.

### Observations:

After analysis of the responses from 104 participants in 16 focus groups over seven (7) months of data collection in 2016, the following conclusions began to emerge regarding the study area. The following observations are based on the responses and comments participants offered to the questions in the focus groups.

#### Observations

- Numerous participants throughout the focus group study indicated that one of the most important qualities of this landscape is its uniqueness. Many comments suggest that this place is like no other they have encountered. The participants point to several qualities which contribute to this uniqueness including: geologic features found nowhere else in the world, outstanding scenery, a diversity of recreational opportunities and settings, and significant seasonal variation in location and opportunity for recreation throughout the study area.
- Many participants identified iconic locations such as Calf Creek Campground and Trail as ideal locations to develop and maintain recreational resources because of their accessibility, beauty, and safety for visitors who might be less familiar with the more rugged parts of the landscape and the demands it places on visitors. They often expressed pleasure in “sharing” these places with the visitors to the area and seeing them enjoy the landscape in the front-country.

- Some participants identified the economic potential for gateway communities that provide a wide-range of services to support recreation in the study area. With the designation of Highway 12 as an All-American Road and the recent Utah Office of Tourism’s “Mighty 5” campaign highlighting national parks in Utah, the study area has been experiencing increased visitor usage by tourists who rely on local services from the surrounding communities. While this has helped the local economy, it has also created the opportunity for more clashes between the visitors and local residents. Several participants expressed a desire to develop plans to ensure these clashes don’t diminish the experience of recreation or quality of life in the area for locals and visitors alike.
- With 1.9 million acres in GSENM, a significant contributing factor to the overall experience of the study area is the enormous scale of the vast open spaces in the landscape. This large-scale setting allows for more dispersed recreation that supports the values of solitude and privacy and remoteness as well as the outcomes associated with tranquil escape which was one of the most popular interest and expectations selected by participants.
- Participants seemed to make a strong distinction between activities and expectations of crowding based on where the place was in the study area. They identified the area along the paved roads (such as Highway 12 and the Burr Trail) as front country where they would expect more visitors, and even enjoyed seeing visitors discovering the wonder of the landscape. Areas further from the roads were identified as back country areas where they hoped to have more of a solitude experience without a lot of visual or auditory reminders of the presence of other humans.
- Most participants also commented on and selected values associated with the wild, natural and rugged characteristics of the landscape. These values allow for the attainment of recreational outcomes associated with the interest and expectation of natural landscapes which is the most preferred selection among all participants as well as the interest and expectation of self-reliant adventures which has appeal to many of the participants who identified as local residents. These values even impacted the ideas of several participants regarding their preferences on the types of roads in the area as they suggested that a less developed road would fit the characteristic of the landscape much better.
- The mode of transportation to encounter the landscape is always a consideration when managing public lands for recreation or other values. While the most popular selection for activity was hiking/walking/running which would indicate that much of this landscape is approached on foot. Often other modes of transportation are used in combination with hiking and walking, so a participant might use a vehicle for initial access then continue deeper into the landscape on foot. There was concern expressed by “quiet users” about the noise and resource damage that can come with ATV and 4x4 traffic, however, most participants supported the idea that the landscape is so large that it can (and should) accommodate all these modes of transportation in the study area.
- There was a larger expressed concern for the effects of livestock grazing on the landscape in this study area than some of the previous phases of the project. While several participants expressed an appreciation of the traditional uses of the landscape including grazing, many others were concerned



that the livestock use, particularly in riparian areas, was contributing to a degradation of the resources, and a diminishment of the recreational experiences they were looking for.

- One of the major management tools to maintain characteristics of the landscape is the ability to assign a number to the total visitor count in an area, and the group size in an area. The fact that every focus group responded to a numeric question in the photo section by suggesting "it depends on..." might cause one to rethink some of those prescriptions.
- The natural landscapes and tranquil escapes opportunities are the overwhelming preferred qualities to be maintained in study area.

The final research in this six-year study will include an additional phase that will take a comparative look at all four areas of the Monument covered in earlier phases. A final report, released in the fall of 2018, will identify a recreational baseline of desired outcomes across the entire Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument, with emphasis on unique qualities of one or more regions.

## Full Report

### Introduction

In 1996, President Bill Clinton standing on the rim of the Grand Canyon created the largest national monument in the country, Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument (GSENM) by setting aside 1.9 million acres of federal land in southern Utah through the Antiquities Act. This vast, wild and rugged landscape was bounded on the north by Highway 12, on the south by Highway 89, on the west by Bryce Canyon National Park and on the east by Capitol Reef National Park and Glen Canyon National Recreation Area. The scale of the GSENM allows for scientific inquiry at a landscape level, endless opportunities for recreation centered on discovery, solitude and awe at the natural wonders that abound throughout the Monument, and preservation of the past from geologic and paleontological origins through ages of human encounters from the indigenous populations to pioneers to the contemporary communities of Kanab, Boulder, Escalante, Bryce Valley and others that surround the Monument. It is truly a unique and spectacular landscape.

Today, GSENM remains a central part of a living landscape connecting communities, native peoples, local residents and an increasing number of visitors from far and wide to a unique and dynamic place that seems at once timeless and familiar, yet ever new and full of surprise and discovery. This report is an attempt to understand the many senses of place that people have associated with Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument. It is a report on the data collected through a series of focus groups (conversations) in 2016 about the area and people's connection to it.

In the fall of 2012, GSENM entered into a five-year assistance agreement with the Natural Resource Center (NRC) at Colorado Mesa University (CMU) in Grand Junction, Colorado to conduct a recreational experience baseline study of the Monument. A recreational baseline study is designed to develop an understanding of the recreational use and demands of a location at a particular time to establish a baseline for future planning or projects. This baseline will also serve as a starting point for conversations between the BLM and their partners in the surrounding communities and beyond regarding recreation in Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument. The study was planned to be conducted in five phases across the almost two-million-acre monument, beginning in 2013 with the areas accessed by Hole in the Rock Road. Phase 2 of the study began in 2014 focused on the Grand Staircase region, and in 2015 Phase 3 focused on the landscapes within the Highway 89 corridor and on the Paria Plateau encompassing parts of GSENM and all of Vermillion Cliffs National Monument. Finally, the areas accessed by Highway 12 and the Burr Trail were studied in 2016. The final year of the study is dedicated to compiling a Monument-wide recreation experience baseline by combining and analyzing each of the earlier phases.

Although the principle focus of the study is on lands within GSENM, it is neither possible nor desirable to exclude the surrounding federal and state lands from the dialogues. Lands adjacent to GSENM that are managed by federal or state agencies include Glen Canyon National Recreation Area, Bryce Canyon and Capitol Reef National Parks, Dixie National Forest, Vermillion Cliffs National Monument, Kodachrome Basin and Escalante Petrified Forest State Parks, Utah State and Institutional Trust Lands, and lands managed by the BLM Kanab and Arizona Strip Field Offices.

A mixed methodology focus group, using audience polling in addition to engaging participants in open dialogue, was used to establish the recreation experience baseline. In this case, a focus group is a structured conversation with a limited number of participants (less than 25) regarding recreation in the Hole in the Rock area or other such iconic locations. The nature of the small-group setting, and open-ended nature of the questions allows for interaction between the participants and the facilitator, and between the participants themselves. This methodology allows participants to express the subtleties and nuances of what really matters to them about recreating in the area. This mixed methodology approach provides a data set that captures both a complete set of responses from each participant using audience polling technology as well as documents a rich set of notes from the group dialogue that gives context and depth to the polling data. Dr. Tim Casey, a Professor of Political Science at CMU and director of the NRC, was named as the principal investigator to conduct the focus groups and prepare the analytical reports.

When the six-year study is complete, each phase will collectively contribute to a rich understanding of the public's recreational preferences, their connections to GSENM and surrounding public lands, as well as the impact of recreational use of those lands on gateway communities.

## Methodology

The mixed methodology focus group, using audience polling in addition to engaging participants in open dialogue, was determined to be the appropriate approach to establish the recreation experience baseline. This methodology captures both a complete set of responses from each participant using audience polling technology as well as documents a rich set of notes from the group dialog that gives context and depth to the polling data. Either approach used alone would leave an incomplete picture of the broad and deep relationships people have with this landscape.

The design of the focus group for data collection entailed a series of discussion questions intended to engage participants in open dialogue about their preferences, interests, and expectations so responses could be captured in their own words. These questions were followed by a list of choices that represented a spectrum of possible responses to the discussion questions that could be responded to via anonymous audience polling. Each participant using a handheld clicker linked to Turning Technologies software captured the audience polling. The open dialogue comments were documented with audio recording equipment as well as by CMU researchers taking notes.

The focus group script covered all the major elements needed in planning for recreation on public lands: preferences for outcomes and experiences, interests and expectations, setting characteristics, activities, and the services needed to support the recreation experience. It included 20 questions, eight were open-ended, nine had prepared responses for audience polling, and three allowed for both polling and open-ended responses. All questions with prepared responses included an "other" option so participants weren't constrained by the prepared responses. Of the open-ended questions, one included a mapping exercise where participants noted special places on a map of the study area, and another included a series of black and white images that focused dialogue on perceptions of crowding and levels of development. The number of questions included in the script was tailored to allow for a 90-minute focus group. See Appendix 1 for a copy of the focus group handout.

The focus groups were conducted between March and October 2016 for this fourth phase of the study. Twelve of the focus groups were conducted in person in the towns of Boulder, Torey and Escalante, Utah. They took place in three separate visits in March, August and October. The remaining four focus groups were conducted digitally via the internet and conference call (these will be referred to throughout this document as “digital focus groups”). The digital focus groups were facilitated through Adobe Connect software and utilized the same discussion prompts and polls that were used during the in-person focus groups.

There were a total of 104 participants in the 16 focus groups for this phase of the research. The participants could remain anonymous, although their responses were tracked and collated using audience polling technology. Some basic demographic information was collected at the beginning of each session. Participants were asked to provide home zip codes to identify how representative this study was of the overall population. The table in Figure 1 indicates the dates, locations, and number of participants for each focus group.

Figure 1 – Table of Focus Groups, Dates and Locations

Focus Group #	Date	Location/Name	Number of Participants
1	3/4/16	Boulder #1	29
2	3/4/16	Escalante #1- Outfitters and guides	13
3	3/4/16	Escalante #2	4
4	3/5/16	Escalante #3	3
5	8/4/16	Escalante #4	5
6	8/5/16	Escalante #5	3
7	8/5/16	Escalante #6	4
8	8/6/16	Boulder #2	8
9	10/17/16	Torrey #1	12
10	10/18/16	Boulder #3	4
11	10/19/16	Escalante #7	3
12	10/19/16	Boulder #4	4
13-16	Summer 2016	Digital Focus Groups	14

Outreach to populate the focus groups included:

- Invitations shared with area boards and committees (i.e. Scenic Byway 12 Committee, Monument Advisory Committee, etc.),
- Direct outreach to partners and key stakeholders (Grand Staircase-Escalante Partners, Glen Canyon Natural History Association, GSENM outfitters and guides, etc.),
- Press releases in local newspapers,
- Flyers posted at visitor centers, local post offices, and in local businesses,
- Postcards distributed in visitor centers,
- Information packets with business cards in trailhead register boxes,
- Group email notices,
- Word of mouth, and
- Direct e-mail or phone contact with any who expressed interest in participating.

The methodology of audience polling allows each participant the opportunity to weigh in on every area of the research. This is important to avoid a wide variety of social setting dynamics that arise in traditional focus group settings, such as only hearing from extroverted participants who dominate a conversation. The polling also minimizes the undue influence of peer settings in small communities. If an individual is worried about the repercussions of their responses mentioned aloud in a focus group within their community, they are not likely to respond, or not as accurately. However, if they can anonymously record their preferences, they may feel safer to express their true opinion. The audience polling using electronic recording devices preserves participants' anonymity while being able to link all their answers together for the purposes of analysis. In traditional focus groups, one might be able to link comments and preferences back to a particular focus group, but unless the group was small and homogenous, it would be difficult to determine preferences for groups, or how those preferences might interact with other preferences (i.e. if a person is seeking solitude, do they choose particular activities or settings to achieve that outcome?). Traditionally, a survey was needed to link these variables; however, a survey often misses the nuance of the dialogue. The advantage of using audience polling and open-ended questions in a focus group setting is that participants can clarify what they mean when they select certain responses.

It is important to note the limitations of using this data. Because the sampling of participants was not random, it would be difficult to suggest this analysis is generalizable to the preferences of the entire population that might be interested in the area, and no attempt to do so is done here. However, effort was made to hear from a broad sample of groups who have a connection to the landscape including both locals and visitors that were willing to spend 90 minutes participating in the conversation. Participants did self-select to join the study but given the diversity of participants and the depth of data gathered, this study is certainly defensible as a solid baseline for recreational experiences in the northern areas of GSENM..

## Demographics

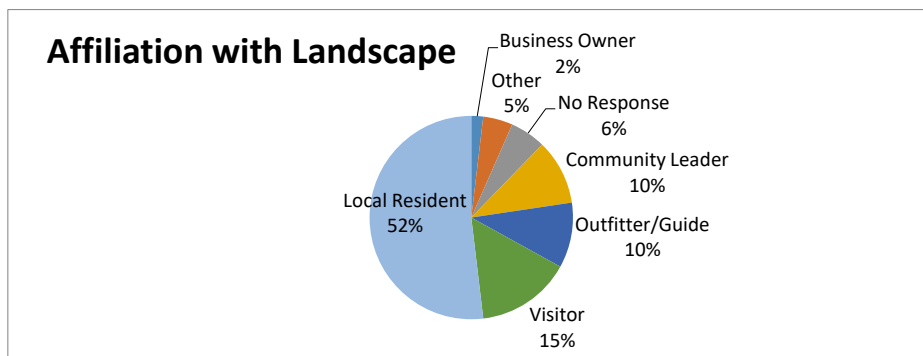
Participation in the study was anonymous and voluntary and no personal information was gathered or retained from the participants other than the two demographic questions of zip code and affiliation.

Although participants could remain anonymous, their responses were tracked and collated using audience polling technology. Participants were asked to provide home zip codes to identify how representative this study was of the overall population. There were 104 participants in this phase of the study. The majority of participants came from zip codes in Utah (71%). Most of those came from Boulder (38.5% of all participants). The next largest group of participants came from Escalante, Utah (only 9.5% of total participants). In addition to Utah residents, participants represented six other states. There were participants from 18 unique zip codes.

Demographic distinctions are important to understand how visitor expectations and experiences on public lands compare to local resident expectations and experiences on landscapes they have a very strong sense of attachment to through years, often generations, of interaction. Understanding these similarities and differences is essential for agencies to effectively manage public lands in partnership with local communities, while balancing local demands with visitor expectations constitutive of a broader national mandate to manage those lands.

Participants were also asked to select one affiliation (role) they played in relation to the landscape. Those selections included: visitor, local resident, community leader, outfitter/guide, business owner, or other. Often individuals had more than one affiliation (for example a business owner might also be a local resident, or an outfitter might also be a visitor), but they were asked to choose their primary affiliation and respond to all questions "wearing that hat." Many of the participants selected affiliations associated with the local area: local resident (52%) and community leader (10%). Visitors represented 15% of the total and outfitters/guides made up 10%. Six percent of respondents did not select an affiliation, and 5% chose "other". Those that selected "other" as a category often indicated that they were part time residents or former federal employees who had settled in the area but might have a different perspective than any of the affiliations offered. Figure 2 shows the composition of the focus group participants in terms of their affiliation with the Phase 4 study area.

Figure 2 –Affiliation of All Participants in Study



## Data Analysis

The data analysis that follows combines the polling data from each question with the spoken comments from the meetings as those questions were discussed. The result is a comprehensive and nuanced collection of participant preferences that will serve as a recreational experience baseline for future planning in the study area. For recreation planning, land managers need to know the desirable outcomes people are seeking when recreating on public lands. They also need to know the activities that people engage in, as well as the landscape setting characteristics that support those interests and expectations. Finally, they need to understand the essential services provided by the agency or surrounding communities that support recreation on the public lands. The data analysis section is divided into these essential elements needed for planning and management of the landscape. This recreational experience baseline data will not only be useful for planning, but it will serve as a background for conversations that BLM can have with its local public and private partners and service providers.

### Desirable and Undesirable Experiences and Outcomes:

#### What are the qualities of the study area that make it special?

Initially, focus group participants were asked to share the qualities of the study area that make it special. A wide variety of responses were given during the open-ended dialogue prior to the prepared list of responses being shared for polling. To allow for analysis, the dialogue responses were grouped with the choices selected through the polling. Comments were coded in terms of what response or responses they related to in the polling selections. There were several comments in each section that didn't neatly fit into the choices offered in the preset audience polling. These responses were coded and grouped according to their concern. Only a representative sample of all the comments are in this report, but the total comments as well as the audio recordings for all focus groups were given to the BLM as part of the administrative record of the research. The responses are discussed in the order of their popularity as measured by the percentage of participants in the entire study (all focus groups) that selected them. Figure 3 shows the overall distribution of responses by all participants.

Figure 3 – Special Qualities of the Phase 4 Study Area



- **Wild, unspoiled and natural/Remote and rugged/Sense of solitude/lack of development**

The most common responses to the question of what make this place special seem to highlight wilderness values of remote (31.7%), undeveloped (27.9%), natural settings (54.8%) that provide a great opportunity for solitude (43.3%). This combination of characteristics was expressed in several of the following comments offered by the participants.

*“Walking in places with no trails and never seeing another person”*

*“The landscape and the remoteness. What shortly happens after that is the people. The landscape, the remoteness and then the people that are attracted to it.”*

*“Have you driven it? The vast landscape and lack of population makes it a beautiful place. The landscape.”*

Others suggested one or two-word comments such as *“unspoiled backcountry”*, or *“wilderness”* or *“wild dreamscape”* to describe their preferred special qualities in this area.



- **Scenic Quality**

The excellent views in this study area contribute to the specialness of the place for many of the participants as recorded in the values of scenic beauty (51%) and dark night skies (32.7%). Several participants commented on how this landscape is particularly special in the way the scenery inspires them. The following comments expressed during the focus groups identify the importance of scenery (often combined with other qualities) in the overall recreational experience in the study area.

*“Unique and spacious, beauty”*

*“Scenery. You drive down the road and it’s mind-bogglingly beautiful.”*

*“World class scenery and unfettered vistas”*

*“Unobstructed. We don’t have billboards. Unobstructed views.”*

*“Incredible starry sky” and “Wonderful night skies”*

- **Sense of Freedom**

Several participants emphasized a sense of freedom (26%) in the study area, often the scale of the landscape contributes to the sense of freedom as indicated by the following comments.

*“Space and freedom”*

*“I think the space promotes kind of a wide-open sense of possibility.”*

- **Unique and diverse landscape**

Another salient theme to emerge out of participants comments on the specialness of the place (but not captured in the list of options all could select) was the uniqueness and the diverse nature of the landscape. A selection of those comments illustrate the point.

*“Diversity of ways you can interact with the landscape”*

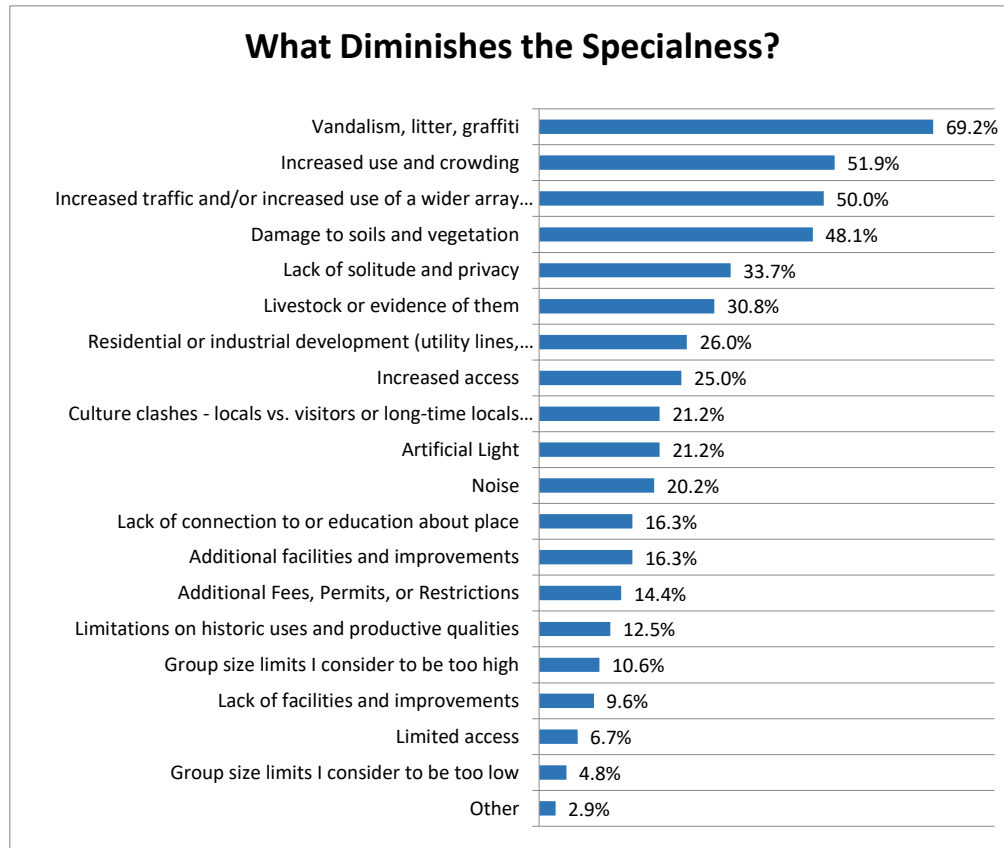
*“For visitors, the constant change of scenery on Highway 12”*

*“ Diversity of topography and landscape”*

### What could or does diminish the specialness of the place?

While it is important to understand why people think a place special, it is equally important to understand what might diminish that specialness and affect their connection to place. After discussing why the Phase 4 study area is special, participants were asked to identify, “What could or does diminish the specialness of the place?” After the open-ended dialogue about the threats to specialness, the participants were given prepared list of qualities from which to choose using the audience polling clickers. Figure 5 shows the percentage of responses selected by all participants. Details about the most commonly selected responses are then discussed in more depth.

Figure 4: Qualities that Diminish Specialness



- **Human impacts**

A primary experience that diminishes the specialness of the study area for many participants in the focus groups has to do with human impacts to the landscape. A strong majority of participants across the study identified the presence of vandalism, litter, graffiti and/or human waste (69.2%) as a significant issue to be addressed. Additionally, damage to soils and vegetation (48.1%) and other negative outcomes are human-caused impacts that are particularly salient for recreation in the area. The following comments offer more detail on how these elements impact recreational visitation to the area.

*“Human impacts—such as—noise, crowding, garbage, human waste”*

*“Places where humans have gathered - lots of human fecal waste.”*

*“Everywhere I go I pick up trash. It gets irritating.”*

*“The damage to soils and vegetation here, but I just feel like with increased use there are a lot of crisscrossing trails out there. With all the people you see parked on the side of the road in popular areas just cruising off with huge groups of people, and I doubt they are very educated on the crypto biotic crust and how that is the carbon sink of the desert. It’s very special. With increased use, there’s going to be a lot of damage, with people going off trail, they aren’t going to understand the importance of that crust.”*

- **Crowding/Vehicles**

In addition to all the human impacts, the sheer increase in number of humans visiting the area has led to concerns about increased use and crowding (51.9%). One out of every two participants selected increased traffic and/or a wider use and array of vehicles (50%) and other crowding issues such as a lack of solitude or privacy (33.7%). The following comments give some more dimension to the concerns raised about crowding.

*“Too many numbers of people going out”*

*“Too many people, improvements to bring more people. I mean when you come to an area like this do you expect to have a bathroom on every corner? Do you expect all the roads to be paved? That’s not the experience I’m looking for. If it’s a national park, that’s a different animal, but out here in a place like this, I think people who want to find it will find it. You don’t need to put up a billboard saying, ‘come on down.’ I understand that it’s money. Public land - you need to make it accessible. But there has got to be some consideration for the characteristics for what makes it so special.”*

*“It was brought up in a Scenic Highway 12 committee. It is becoming overpopulated. It’s just too many people. One of the comments that I get is, ‘if you’re coming from the West once you get on 89 - 89 from 12 and 89 to Bryce - is heavy traffic but once you get to Bryce, it’s wide open’.”*

*“ATVs, offroad vehicles. To me I don’t really like them anywhere in a natural place. So that diminishes the experience for me.”*

Other comments about vehicle and traffic issues named vehicles such as “Harleys” and “diesel pickup trucks” and more generically “noisy vehicles”.

- **Livestock or evidence of their use**

This area of the Monument seems to be suffering from livestock or evidence of their use (30.7%) according to the participants. The participants verbalized these concerns in a variety of ways as the following comments indicate.

*“Grazing rights that are tearing up the land”*

*“Too much barbed wire”*

*“For years I’ve been concerned about the grazing on public lands. I think it diminishes the quality.”*

*“If grazing were done away with, for me that would enhance the experience.”*

Other participants found some livestock acceptable as long as it was properly managed, as the following comments suggest.

*“Too many cows, some cows are okay.”*

*“I did choose it (referring to the livestock selection). When I came here 1990, the month of June, you could not go on that river. It was called ‘cow fly season.’ It was unbearable; it was horrible. The biting flies from here to the bridge to downstream - people just had to run full speed or not go at all. When the Monument was created, the permittee voluntarily sold his permit since there were so many complaints. Most notably, those biting flies - and they bought it out in ‘98, and they didn’t get them off the river until 2000. Every year after that there were fewer and fewer, until this year there were zero. It’s something people forget about, but I’d like it on the record. You could go up Death Hollow because the livestock didn’t get up there.”*

*“Some of the traditional uses—like grazing—would change the community and the landscape if they were removed entirely. Total loss of grazing would be a negative.”*

- **Culture clash between locals and visitors and the politics of public lands**

More than any other phase of the study, participants identified culture clash (21.2%) and political conflict as an important characteristic of the area that diminishes the specialness of the place. This may be reflective of the Highway 12 corridor (the study area for Phase 4) or it may reflect the increased political tension over public lands issues in 2016 when the data was collected for this phase rather than earlier years and phases of data collection. The following comments are an example of many that were recorded in this phase of the research regarding specialness-diminishing qualities of the landscape.

*“Clarify that the culture clashes. I think that’s one of the things that frustrates me more than anything else is that because so much of it seems uninformed. I mean it’s there, but I think the woo woo environmental side is just as bad the hardened cattle side. They both get stuck with very little knowledge of other people. There’s just not appreciation.”*

*“Ignorance of the history of public lands and conservation in the United States, which has led to all this talk of turning it over to private interest and so forth, without any knowledge or history about how it came to be.”*

*"In our area, a lot of the conversation against this whole thing bothers me. Against this protected land, the political atmosphere"*

*"Political indifference to the specialness and appreciation of this area"*

*"Politics, there's a lot of hate."*

- **Infrastructure development**

Given the remote, rugged and natural values that so many participants placed on the landscape, they are not interested in residential or industrial development (26%) or additional facilities and improvements (16.3%) in the study area. Several of the comments referred to increased signage and billboards going up along Highway 12.

*"I just heard about billboards springing up along Highway 12. Super-upsetting to me."*

*Huge increase in signage -along the Hogsback -more and more signs "*

*"I think of Moab and how commercial development went to exploiting the land. With everything, seems to be going towards what can we do - Jeep Safaris and dozens and dozens of mountain biking, and over the top."*

*"Overdevelopment, we're not getting any information."*

*"I was really upset when they fixed that last seven miles {of Hole in the Rock Road}, now you can get there in a sedan. That's not right. "*

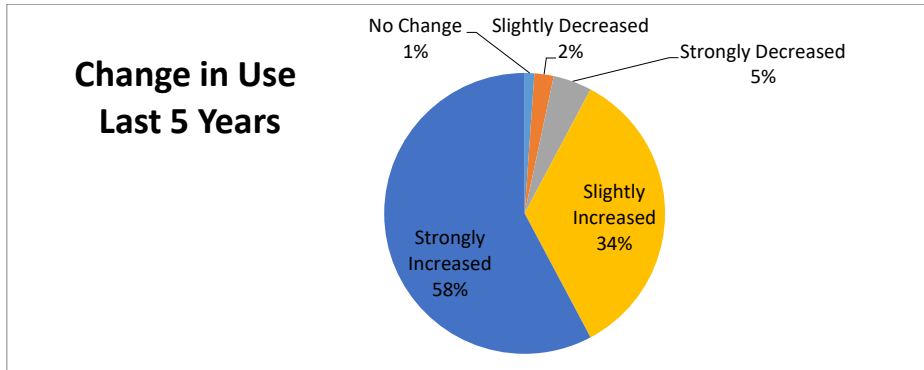
*"Additional lights, destroying the dark night skies. Development of lights and lighting"*

#### How has the use of the area changed in the last five years? Has it been for the better or worse?

The next question revolved around the nature of change the participants had noticed and their perception of whether those changes in use were for the better or worse. These questions are related, and when discussing their answers, participants were encouraged to speak both of how much change they had noticed, as well as whether it had made things better or worse, and why. All participants were asked to record their selections on a series of two Likert scales using the audience polling clickers. The first scale recorded how much change in use they noticed in the area over the last five years from strongly decreased to strongly increase with a neutral value of no change in the middle of a 5-point scale. The second scale

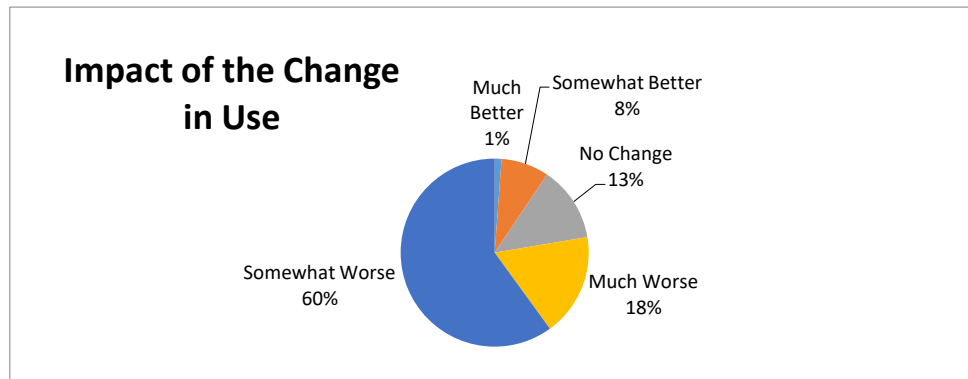
recorded whether they felt that the change they had indicated had made things much better to much worse with a neutral no change in the middle of a 5-point scale.

Figure 5 shows the response to the question on the nature of change in use over the last five years. Figure 5: Nature of Change in Use



It is clear from Figure 5 that use in the study area has increased in the last five years according to the participants in this phase of the study. Almost all participants indicated use had increased either slightly or strongly (58% strongly + 34% slightly = 92% indicate increase use). Only 7% of the participants indicated use had decreased in any way from their perspective. In their clarifying comments several participants indicated that they attribute at least part of the increase in visitation and use to the effects of the internet to access information on the area, and as individuals talk about the area over the internet and social media. Many also attributed some of the increase to the Utah Office of Tourism “Mighty 5” campaign because GSENM is sandwiched in between Bryce and Capitol Reef National Parks, two of the “Mighty 5”. Publicity of the beauty of the area is drawing people to the Monument (especially along Highway 12) and the increased visitation is having a negative impact on the landscape, according to most participants, but it is having a beneficial effect on the local tourism economy and affiliated industries.

Figure 6: Value of Change in Use over the Last Five Years



When considering how the change affected the landscape and their connection to it; few identified the change in use as making the conditions better (except in terms of economic revenue generation for the local tourist economy). Sixty percent of all participants noted that change had made conditions somewhat worse. Eighteen percent of participants indicated that the change made conditions in the area much worse. This is twice the number of participants that indicated that the increased use had actually made conditions somewhat better. Figure 6 depicts the perceived value of the change in use in the last five years.

The following comments illustrate some of the ways conditions were perceived to be better or worse because of the general trend of increased use in the area over the last five years. It appears that determining whether conditions have worsened or not could depend on an individual's affiliation with (and expectations of) the landscape and the management response to the increased use. In this phase of the study, many of the locals indicated that they simply change the location within the Monument, or the season they recreate to avoid the crowding. Most indicate that there are still many places to go and find solitude, even with increased crowding. Several also indicated that emergency services and other services are struggling to keep up with the increased volume of visitors, especially along Highway 12. The following quotes are a sample of the comments received regarding the value of the change in use they identified.

*"I think it's increased, big increase. The other thing I think, because of the internet, people have a more information, are looking up blogs and different things, and have a better idea of what to look for and where to go. "*

*"That 'Might 5' campaign brought so many people. I'm more familiar with Kanab, but hotels, traffic on the highway, restaurants and a seat at the table. There's places you can go to get away from the crowds, like you don't go to Calf Creek or Peekabo or Spooky. But there's canyons galore where you can get away from people. There's other times where you can't choose, like when you're coming back into town and you're at the gas pump. You all have to use it. I don't think the services have really responded to the shoulder seasons. For instance, Kanab restaurants on Friday night at 8 o'clock is shutting down, and you're like "Really?". I don't think they have responded to the use that's occurring more through the shoulder seasons and winter."*

*"The incredibly increased strain on emergency services in this county and landfill difficulties and the lack of the County to catch up."*

*"It's kind of a catch-22 because with more people you get more impact, but if you don't have the people they get disconnected from this outdoor nature. It's kind of a flip the coin - one way or the other you have problems."*

*"Down Hole in the Rock Road, there's only one bathroom for a sixty-mile road that has tons of visitors daily. It has a huge amount of traffic. I'd love to see a traffic counter of the people that are going down there. I put somewhat worse. You're finding so many in the remote places - piles of the toilet paper behind any bush that looks like a good bush. Then we're finding this on the Burr Trail as well. Burr Trail is still undiscovered because people mostly do the Highway 12. But the Burr Trail is being discovered the first 15 miles and then they turn around and come back. It's amazing that section. Any rock that looks like a good rock you can fit behind, you go around behind and there's toilet paper galore. I pick up trash everywhere I go but some of those are hard to pick up. There's an impact of the higher crowds that are coming in. From my understanding two or three years ago we got rated, Highway 12 got voted on CNN for the second most scenic highway on the planet. We saw*

*living here an immediate increase from that point, from when that went out on the worldwide news. Boom.”*

*“I put down somewhat worse because I think that it’s just incremental how people get off trails whether they’re in a car or walking or whatever the access. It’s just incrementally people push the boundaries of where it makes sense for them to be. You know more about the archeological sites, the few I’ve visited they’ve degraded in many cases.”*

*“There’s less solitude, canyon trailheads where there used to be no cars, but now there will be two or three. It’s not a big change but it’s enough where you don’t have it to yourself anymore. It leads me to think there will be ten next time I come up there or twenty.”*

*“So, it’s all relative. The experience here is still incredible to some places.”*

### What are your interests and expectations when going out into the study area?

Research has indicated that people visit public lands to achieve a variety of beneficial outcomes and experiences for themselves, their communities, and the environment, while at the same time trying to avoid adverse outcomes and experiences. The list of such outcomes and experiences is extensive, but further research has discovered that people tend to bundle these experiences and expectations into a limited number of profiles of interests and expectations.<sup>1</sup> Participants were given a list of 12 profiles of interests and expectations they might have when visiting the study area. Each profile included a descriptive sentence of what someone choosing that profile might say.

The profiles and descriptions included the following:

1. **Natural Landscapes** - I like to surround myself with the beauty of open space and the wildness of mountains, forests, rangeland, water and wildlife.
2. **Rural Landscapes** - I want to connect with the visual landscapes, sense of place and pace of rural areas where people make their living from the land.
3. **Cultural & Heritage History** - I am interested in how historic and prehistoric peoples lived in the area, and in exploring the connections I have with those peoples.
4. **Natural History & Science** - I am interested in knowing about natural processes in this area and the study of the scientific value of the landscape for enhancing our understanding of the world around us.
5. **Health & Fitness** - I like being able to regularly access public lands recreation areas that help me get and stay fit or improve my mental well-being.
6. **Self-Reliant Adventure** - I prefer outdoor adventure on my own that challenges my outdoor skills, improves my abilities, and maybe even involves some risk.

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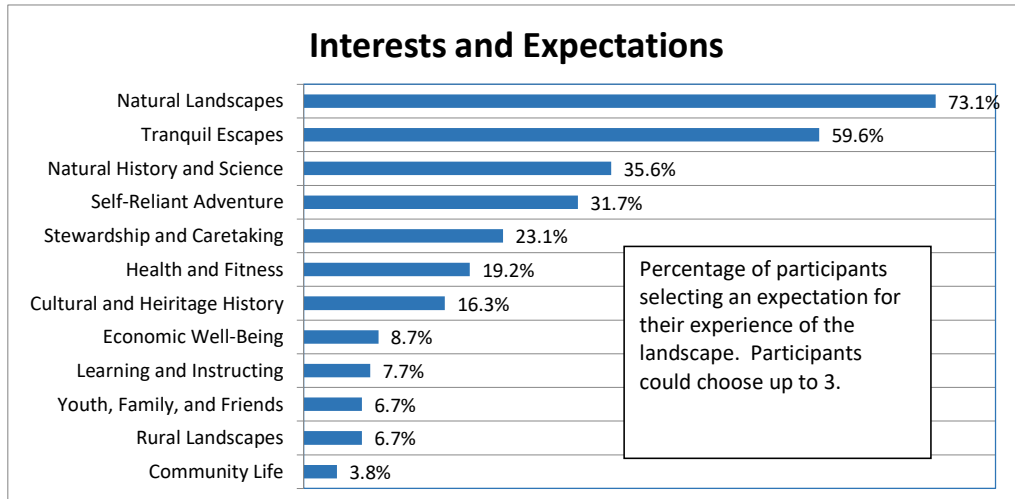
<sup>1</sup> For a good discussion of the experiences and outcomes that people seek when recreating in public lands see the work of Driver, B.L. and D.H. Bruns. 1999. Concepts and Uses of the Benefits Approach to Leisure. P. 349-369 in Leisure Studies: Prospects for the Twenty-First Century E.L. Jackson and T.L. Burton et al. (eds.). Venture Publishing, State College, PA. Venture. To see the research that narrows the list of experiences and outcomes into profiles of interests and expectations see Parry, B., Gollob, J. and Frans, J. 2014. Benefits of public land usage: an analysis of outdoor recreationists. In Managing Leisure 19(4). That study narrowed the profiles down to eight (8). Those eight (8) are used in this study along with an additional four (4) that were added to more comprehensively capture people’s expected experiences and outcomes for recreating in these landscapes.



7. **Tranquil Escapes** - I look forward to the quiet serenity of getting away from it all for some mental and physical relaxation, reflection, and renewal.
8. **Youth, Family & Friends** - I am enriched by socializing with others: young people, my family and/or friends and enjoying companionship in the outdoors together.
9. **Community Life** - I like seeing what the discovery and enjoyment of nearby open space recreation does for my community and our visiting guests
10. **Economic Well-being** - I want to see public lands recreation areas contributing in a significant way to our economic livelihood.
11. **Learning & instructing** - I feel comfortable having others equip and enable me to do recreation and tourism outings—or being part of helping others learn how to do that.
12. **Stewardship & Caretaking** - I like giving back to the outdoors from what I've received by helping care for special sites and facilities, so others can also enjoy them.

Participants could select up to three profiles. Figure 7 shows the percentage of total selections by all participants for interest and expectation profile options. Figure 8 shows the analysis by affiliation preference to see if additional insight could be gained on the motivation for visiting this area and how that might differ depending on who is visiting.

Figure 7: Interest and Expectation Profiles



The most popular sets of interests and expectations for the study area are the natural *landscapes* (73.1%) and *tranquil escapes* (59.6%). This seems to support the strong interest in the wild, natural, rugged and remote characteristics of much of this landscape where one can find the desired experiences of solitude and renewal of mind and spirit in nature. There is also a real interest in the learning and discovery characteristics of the *natural history and science* (35.6%) of the study area, as well as in *self-reliant adventures* (31.7%). 23.1% of the participants chose *stewardship and caretaking*, which provides an

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opportunity for partnerships when management actions are needed. **Figure 8: Interest and Expectations by Affiliation**

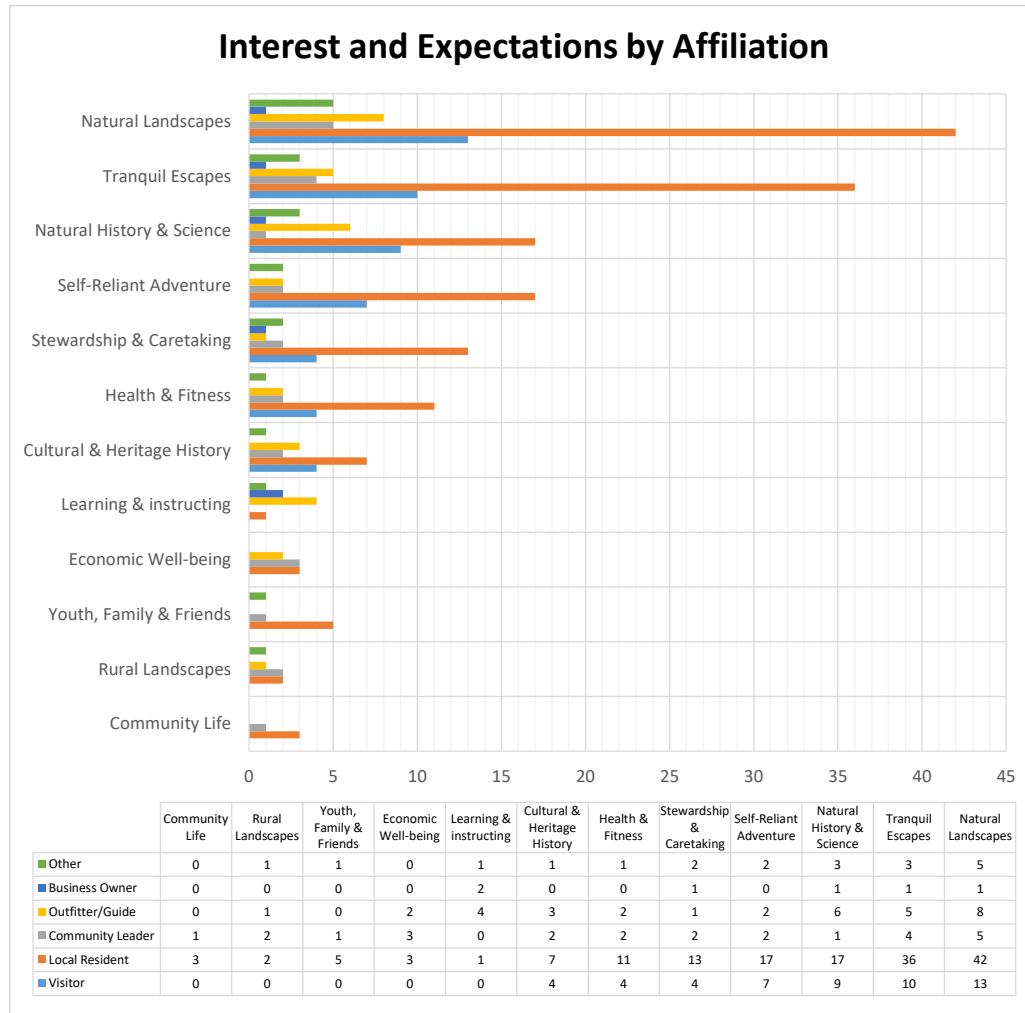


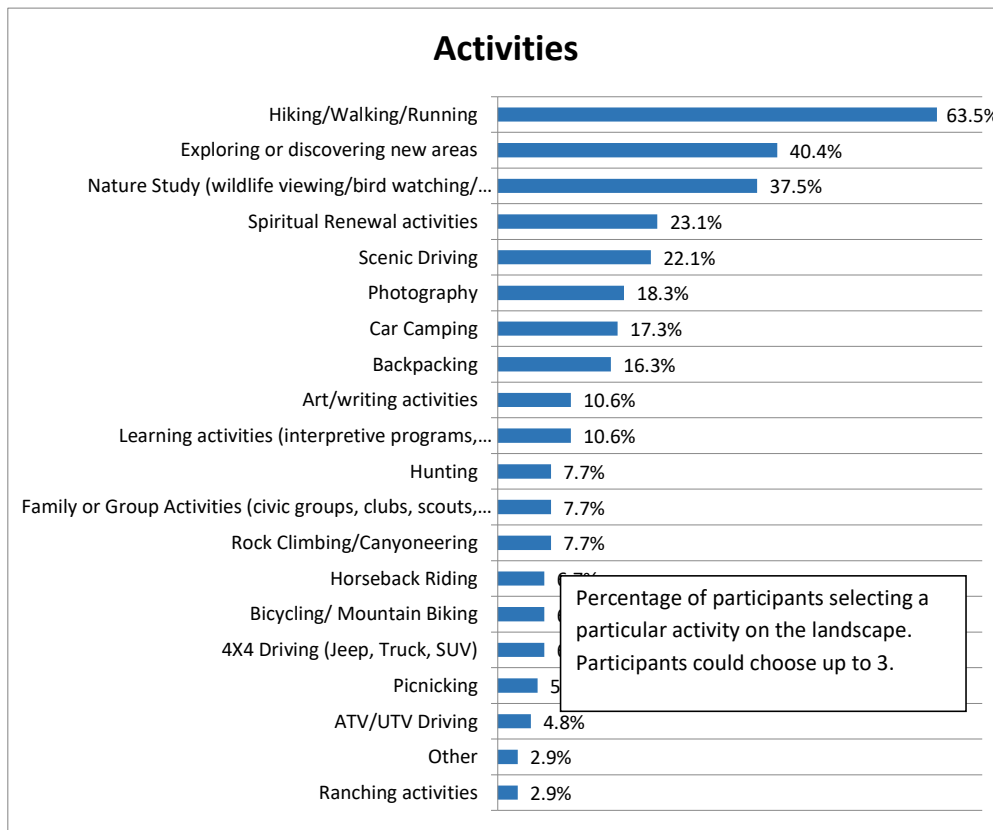
Figure 8 displays preferences for interest and expectations of the landscape by affiliation. The bar chart identifies the number of participants in each affiliation group that selected an interest and expectation. For clarity, the table below the bar chart shows the number of participants in each affiliation that selected each of the interest and expectation options. It should be noted again, that they could chose up to three options.

Some values such as natural landscapes, tranquil escapes, natural history and science, and stewardship and caretaking appear in every affiliation. Other values such as self-reliant adventures and health and fitness have relevance for some affiliations such as visitors and local residents, but less so for business owners.

## Activities

Traditional recreation studies on public lands typically begin by determining which activities people engage in, then determining how and whether those activities could be supported by the land base. More contemporary recreation studies focus instead on the interests, expectations and benefits the public receives from recreating on public lands and the settings necessary to provide them, recognizing that a variety of activities can provide similar benefits and meet expectations if the settings needed remain intact. Also, discussing preferred activities tends to allow people to form “tribes” and allow stereotypes to cloud interactions. For these reasons, activities were not discussed until midway through each focus group during this study. After discussing the specialness of the place, threats to it, and participants’ interests and expectations, they were asked to select up to three activities they engaged in most often from a prepared list. Participants could select more than one activity and had the option of selecting "other" then were asked to clarify it. Figure 9 shows the number of participants that selected any given activity.

Figure 9: Activities Engaged in Most Often



When asked to choose the activities they engage in most often, a significant majority of participants selected hiking/walking/running (63.5%) as their top activity. Several activities selected highlighted the observation, study and learning objectives outlined in the GSENM Management Plan. Examples include nature study (37.5%), self-guided discovery and exploration of the area (40.4%) as well as learning opportunities (10.6%). The visual resources in the area are central to several very popular activities such as scenic driving (22.1%), photography (18.3%), and art/writing activities (10.6%).

The results of this question indicate that there is significant preference for non-motorized recreation though recreational activities on this landscape are certainly not limited to only those pursuits, and that recreational plans in the area will need to address the diversity of activities that occur. The following comments from the meetings indicate that the landscape and the lack of crowding enhances the choice of activity and the enjoyment of it.

*“Observes wildlife without a lot of other people around is better/different/preferred”*

*“The place is for me I put is just inherently special to me. The landscape out here. I mean the favorite activity is hiking and walking but that’s not what do I recreate as very primarily because of the place. It is a stand there and be happy stand there and be happy or walk around and see what’s around.”*

*“I got to be in a place where I can have outdoor activity, and hiking is primary”*

### Most Special Places Mapping

To contextualize comments from the focus groups about the study area, participants were asked to identify special places by writing place names on sticky notes and attaching them to the general location of the place on a large map. They were also asked “*Why is this area particularly special?*” They could either record those responses on the sticky notes or verbalize them in the discussion afterwards. Figure 10 lists the most commonly articulated places and the discussion that follows captures some of the conversations about the places identified. The table includes the top 28 locations named by frequency, but there were 257 places identified, of which 99 unique locations were named. The table contains all places that were mentioned at least three times by different participants, which correlates to 28.2% of the total number of unique special places identified, and 66.5% of all special places identified. It is clear from this sample that the area is a diverse complex of special places, few of which are special to everyone, but many of which are particularly important to some people. All sites identified, along with their locations and comments on why they are special, were recorded and mapped and included in the data provided to GSENM for this study.

Figure 10: Identified Special Places

<u>Location Name</u>	<u>Number of selections</u>	<u>% of total special places named</u>
Escalante River	16	6%
Burr Trail	13	5%
Deer Creek	11	4%
Spencer Flat	11	4%
Calf Creek	9	4%
Upper Calf Creek	9	4%
Upper Calf Creek Falls	9	4%
Wolverine Loop	9	4%
Death Hollow	8	3%
Hole in the Rock Road	6	2%
The Gulch	6	2%
Boulder Mail Trail	5	2%
Circle Cliffs	5	2%
Lower Calf Creek	5	2%
Boulder Mountain	4	2%
Escalante Canyon	4	2%
Harris Wash	4	2%
Lamp Stand	4	2%
Long Canyon	4	2%
Lower Calf Creek Falls	4	2%
Phipps Arch	4	2%
20 Mile Wash/Dinosaur Track Site	3	1%
Dixie National Forest	3	1%
Egypt	3	1%
McGath Bench	3	1%
Middle Calf Creek	3	1%
The Box/Death Hollow Wilderness	3	1%
Waterpocket Fold	3	1%

The comments that surfaced as to why these places are special varied from unique qualities of the place to personal connections to the place. The most commonly selected special places in this area seem to revolve around rivers, creeks and other water sources; Escalante River, Deer Creek and Calf Creek (in all its variations and waterfalls). Another significant set of open places center around roads through the landscape such as the Burr Trail and Wolverine Loop. These natural passage corridors seem to draw people into landscape where they encounter the land differently than traveling down Highway 12. Other special places mentioned offer camping and hiking opportunities such as Spencer Flats and Death Hollow.

## Settings

### Is it the place or the activity or both that is most important to you?

There is a good deal of debate among academics and practitioners of recreational management on public lands as to whether the place is most important and people simply chose activities to enjoy the places where they want to be; or whether the activities they engage in are most important and they simply look for ideal places to engage in their chosen activities. The answer to this debate is likely to have a direct impact on the way the area is managed to provide desired setting characteristics. To better understand how this debate plays out in the study area, participants were asked whether the place is most important to them, or the activity, or a combination of the two.

Most of the participants (64.4%) said that both place and activity were important to them. The second most popular selection was that the place itself is inherently special (19.2%) and activity was only selected by 1.9% of all participants. Specific comments offered by the participants offer some clarification into the thinking behind their selections:

*"I certainly enjoy the activity I do here, and I could do it anywhere, but this is a special place. Not necessarily just the Monument, but the whole Four Corners area. This place appeals to me. There's more of it than there are people. I also think it's such a unique and extraordinary place that I don't mind seeing people come here. With a forward-thinking approach of visitation that people can renew themselves - they can support efforts to rehabilitate the area, make it a place that a hundred years from now will have the same qualities as it does now that attract us."*

*"For me having lived in huge metropolitan areas all my life. It is a place of renewal and then activity. I like to be active."*

*"Unlike the MOAB area, you don't have the quiet there."*

*"More special because they interact"*

### Crowding Analysis Using Series of Black and White Landscape Images

One of the principle considerations for land managers and recreation planners is the setting characteristics for the landscape that should be tied to interests and expectations of the public. Unfortunately, the settings matrix used to determine the appropriate setting (primitive to urban) along at least 16 different setting characteristics (see Appendix 2) can be overwhelming to members of the public, so it is difficult to determine what really matters most.

To get at what matters most to the participants in terms of setting characteristics related to the issue of crowding, a series of black and white images without any sign of other visitors were offered. The same discussion prompt, "If you came across other people while visiting the scene in this photo, how many people would be too many people before it would change the character of the place for you?" was included with each image. Since many public landscapes have prescriptions that limit the number of people in some way, the prompt was good to begin discussion; but more important than the number assigned, was the rationale participants used to make their determinations. Open-ended discussion was encouraged before participants were asked to record a number with the clickers.

The four images in the series and the comments they generated follow below.

Figure 11 – Image of Representative Large-Scale Landscape



The first image was a black and white image of a large-scale landscape without people in the scene so that participants would be able to use their imagination to locate people in the scene in order to comment on how many would be too many. The scale of this landscape generated the most comments regarding the activities that might occur in it. Generally, they were more concerned about noise and resource damage, than the traditional crowding issues implied in the question. Other areas of concern had to do with the proximity of others. While they do not seem to mind some others around in this landscape, many of the comments indicated that the participants would prefer not to have any activity too close to them. This concern was more pronounced in the later more “close in” landscape images. The following comments are examples of the conversations that arose surrounding this landscape image.

*“I think expectancy has so much to do with it and you go the Calf Creek campground and its really fun to go in the winter and only see three people, but on the well-travelled trails you’re expecting to see people. If you go out on your own and it’s not a trail and you’re going just to explore, still a couple people might be nice but it’s about expectancy.”*

*“If it was a trailhead, let’s say “Gulley Park” then I would say twenty-five trail hikers are fair enough for a visitation zone, but if it’s not a trail, if it’s the backcountry area, it’d be a different experience.”*

*“ Sometimes it also depends on their behavior. Activities and behavior because bad behavior can exhibit itself in activities. An example is graffiti, also driving on slickrocks, that kind of thing, and leaving stains, tire marks.”*

*“One thing that is really unique compared to most other places, is we don’t have many trails. Glacier Park you’re stuck on the trails. Down here, you have a lot of freedom, you can get away. I’ll ride quite a*

*distance and there will be twelve people cross country. Here your sight distance is so much further than most places.”*

*“I think it depends how I got there. If I stepped out of my car, that would be one thing. If I stepped out of my car it’d be a great view. If I was hiking for three days and came over the ridge that would be different”.*

Figure 12 – Image of Representative Close Scale Landscape



This second image is a much more restricted area in terms of space. Several participants simply looked at the limited distance that groups are visible in a space such as this canyon and focused more on the concentrating effect of the canyon walls on noise, group sizes, and proximity of activities. In general, participants favored fewer numbers in this confined space relative to the earlier image of a “wide-open” landscape. Several comments were also made about how important it is to have recreational opportunities around water in this area. The following sample of comments underscores these changed expectations.

*“In connection with that [Leave No Trace education], it’s not necessarily how many people there are but how they are behaving. If they are walking quietly and preserving and aware of what’s around them, it’s a lot more tolerable than a large group that is all talking really loud about what they are going to have for dinner and they aren’t even looking at what’s around them. If they are leaving trash everywhere and they are barreling by you, so you don’t even have any time to get out of their way.”*

*“ My experience has been if you are on a several day hike or even an overnight hike, if you meet another party, there’s another place to camp downstream or up stream. As long as people are quiet and respectful, it makes a lot of difference. If you have a group of fifteen or twenty young, college*



*students having a party it's a lot different than having like twelve people in their sixties quietly spending time together. The noise is the issue. This area you can travel through and no one will know you were there the next day if you just pick up after yourself."*

*"I would agree - fewer would be better than more. The other situation that I have encountered is cows and riparian areas. There are areas other than those that would be less impacted, or at least you would notice it less because they weren't there but when they've been there you certainly know it. That's recognizing the culture of the area, but I think there could be more compromise."*

*"It all depends on the front country or back country. Front country let's just say Calf Creek Falls, you go there you expect to see people, you're not surprised. There might be a few more than you wanted to see. But with backcountry, you are going there to be alone."*

*"The tightness in the space makes it more personal to me."*

*"Sometimes good to see people appreciating the landscape in the same way as me."*

*"The wildlife enjoying the water, more disturbance, high impact on the wildlife"*

*"I think it'd be depending upon time intervals. If there's twenty-five people in there all at once, I'd be really upset about that. If I was hiking through here and I came across half a dozen people during the day that would be okay because it's spread out over an interval of time".*

Figure 13 – Image of a Representative Lesser Known Landscape



The third image was of a location recognizable primarily to locals who explore off-the-beaten path areas. . The responses from local residents differed considerably from their responses to the fourth image in the series of an iconic, well-known, and highly-publicized location. In general, they seemed to value the

solitude, small numbers of people and small group size they would encounter in this place and expressed their concern about the health of this location if it was “discovered” by non-locals. There were also several activity related comments that were consistent with the solitude of this “hidden gem.” They were concerned about safety, crowding, and the surprise when other visitors approached. The following comments are representative of those offered regarding this image.

*“I know where it is. I don’t want to see anyone.”*

*“If I just walked up to it and there were one or two other people there, I’d feel disappointed. I would like to have it for myself for a little while.”*

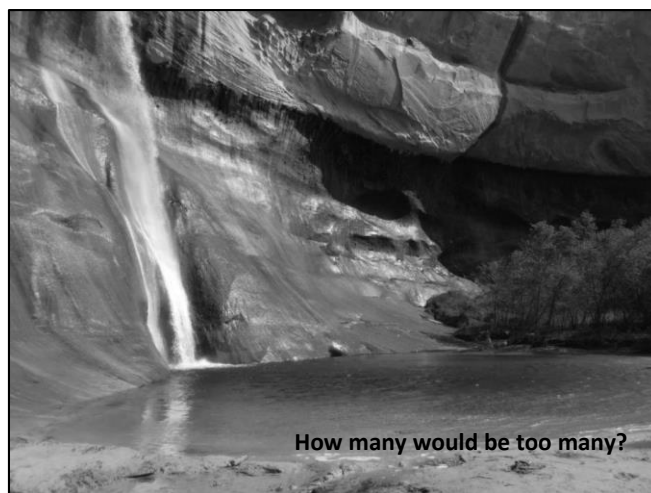
*“That’s an amazing spot, so easily accessible from where you park your car it’s ridiculous. No one knows about it, and we don’t want people to know about it. That’s another one of those really special places and the locals have worked hard to keep it off {the map}. Four people there is too many.”*

*“If this one got a lot of foot traffic, we’d have a lot of injuries, deaths because there’s a drop off right next to this picture that everybody likes to get close to and it’s slippery. We don’t really want people to know about this one.”*

*“I’d like to stand under the water and let my ears flap.”*

*“Because you got pools there, there’s an urge to skinny dip and I wouldn’t want some company.”*

Figure 14 – Image of Representative Well-known Landscape



The final image is of the iconic destination – Lower Calf Creek Falls. Calf Creek Falls is the most visited site on the Monument, and the comments regarding crowding reflected this. Some participants changed their expectations of crowding because they expected higher numbers of visitors. Others avoided the area

because they expected more visitors and did not want that experience or waited until the off-season to visit the site. Based on the comments from participants identifying as local residents, it is clear that the winter or off-season visitation of this site is most preferred by local residents and still very special. The following are a few of the comments about this location and the question of crowding.

*"I've hiked Calf Creek Falls a lot, and I don't mind if there is a group at the falls because that's the expectation. But I have been overrun by huge groups and that's kind of annoying."*

*"It doesn't bother me to see a lot of people there. There's a trail there, it's safe. It's a place most people can go and be safe and experience the natural world knowing they will be back in automobile in a few hours and on their way. It's also nice to go and not see anyone."*

*"Seen a lot of people. The waterfall is a destination for hikers. More visible. Can go in the off-season - still want small number of people."*

*"What about seasons? You'd expect more during peak seasons."*

*"This is the bottom of the Falls. You could get eighty people around on that beach and it doesn't really bother me. It's okay there, it's a fun family place there, to have children running and screaming and playing in the water. It's fulfilling to me."*

*"With that expectation - it's a reality. It's a popular spot. If you go there, you know you're going to run into more people."*

*"For the amount of use it gets, it's pretty good. There isn't much trash or impact."*

With all these images, several participants expressed concern about assigning a number to the question of how many would be too many. They were concerned partly because of all the variables that might affect that number during different times and conditions, but they were also concerned about what the BLM would do with such numbers. Their fear was that once a number was assigned; there would be more restrictions and limitations of access to manage for those numbers of visitors. With areas such as Lower Calf Creek Falls some participants expressed concern that restrictions would be enhanced, and additional restrictions might be placed on other parts of the Monument and surrounding landscape.

### Landscape Imagery Analysis

In general, there was reluctance amongst participants to assign a number answering the question, *"How many would be too many?"* to each image, but after extensive discussion, several participants did so with the polling clickers. Fewer participants answered these questions related to crowding than any other question in the focus group. While other questions generally had 95% or higher participation with clicker responses, these images had response rates that were below 40%. This seemed to match the reluctance to respond with a specific number either because it was too contingent on numerous other factors described above, or fear that a specific number could be used to justify restrictions on the number of people who could visit a site. In general, they were least likely to offer a number for human encounters in the intimate canyon setting image because of the smaller scale of the place and the desire to be uncrowded. The comments and numbers of acceptable people in the images indicate that some of the key determining

factors that impact perceptions of crowding include the scale of the landscape, the activities and proximity of other people, impacts to quiet and visual values of the area, the accessibility and level of development, and the familiarity with the site. The more accessible a setting, the larger the scale of the landscape, and the more known and iconic a setting, the more one expects to see others.

#### Analysis of Road Development Preferences Using Black and White Images

Participants were asked to compare images depicting various levels of road development in the study area to determine their preferences for travelling within the landscape. There were two sets of images. The first set asked participants about primary roads in the area (these were defined as roads such as the Burr Trail Road and Hole in the Rock Road etc.), not highways. The second set asked participants about secondary roads (defined as those roads spurring off the primary roads accessing specific recreational destinations such as Spencer Flats Road or Wolverine Loop, etc.).

#### Primary Roads

The four images provided for the primary road question are shown in Figure 15. The explanations associated with each photo included:

- Photo 1 – An asphalt paved road with painted striping
- Photo 2 – An asphalt paved road with no striping
- Photo 3 – A crowned and ditched gravel road – regularly maintained
- Photo 4 – A natural surface road - regularly maintained

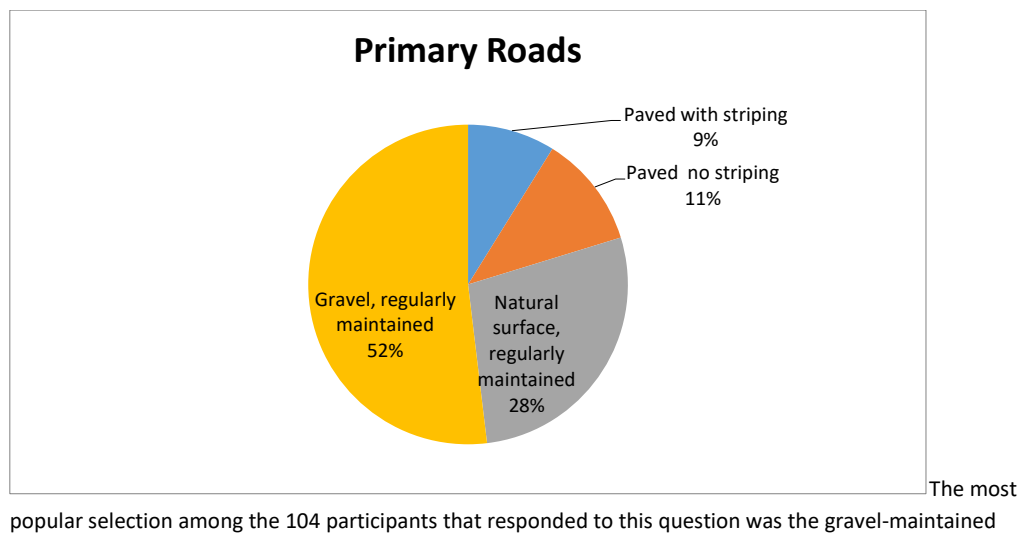
Figure 15: Primary Road Development Preference Images



**Which of these do you prefer as a secondary road?**

Participants could select only one option when asked, “Which road would you prefer as a primary road when traveling through or going to recreate in the study area?” Figure 16 shows the percentage each choice was selected. The data revealed a preference for non-paved options (#3 and #4) from the majority (80%) of the participants.

Figure 16: Primary Road Development Preferences



crown and ditch road (52%). The other surface preferred by several participants was the bladed natural surface (28%). Nearly four of every five participants indicated a preference for non-paved roads. Only 20% of the participants that answered this question selected any type of pavement for the primary roads (excluding HWY 12) in the study area. While it is important to remember that these percentages are not generalizable to the larger population, they illustrate trends among those willing to commit the time and effort to participate in one of the focus groups, and thus show an active interest in GSENM management actions related to development of roads and travel corridors.

This set of questions illustrates the value of a mixed methodology in which participants not only select an option but are able to offer comments about why they made their selection. The additional comments are useful information for managers and local officials responsible for determining the level of development of the roads in the study area. Comments offered in clarification of their choices support leaving roads less developed, although an important minority of participants expressed support for the development of access to various points on the Monuments for visitors who might not otherwise be able to access them.

The comments can be grouped along several themes. First, there were numerous comments about the need for the roads to match the landscape and contribute to the overall experience of the place. Secondly, the quality of the road is important to many. This includes the concerns for maintenance of the roads, their drivability, and the type of vehicles that can use roads on the Monument. Third, the safety of the visitors and the impact to the resources from overuse was of great concern to some participants.

#### **Theme #1 – Naturalness – the road should “fit” the landscape**

Road conditions have an impact on the recreational experience people have in the landscape. Several comments indicated that the roads should match the natural, remote and rugged character of the area and contribute to achieving the much-desired solitude experience (as documented elsewhere throughout this report).

*“I prefer four. It just lends to that wilderness experience or maximum scenic and outdoor experience.”*

*“Dirt road adds to experience.”*

*“I would choose four because it’s the closest to the rustic and remote aspect that I’m looking for.”*

#### **Theme #2 – Quality of Road – access**

Some participants commented on the trade-off between developed roads and the solitude experience that might be adversely affected by larger numbers of visitors.

*“Well doesn’t it depend on if you are trying to go town to town, or if you are trying to go out into the wilderness?”*

*“Road determines amount of use. {Edward} Abbey didn’t like the roads that gave usage. “*

*“Roads have been tough on the vehicle and may keep people from enjoying the backcountry.”*

*“And if you leave a road like this unmarked then the person has to actually read a map to go down it. I think it limits access to people who can read a map and know where they are going.”*

### **Theme #3 – Safety for visitors and resource impacts**

*“Primary roads from a safety aspect, yes, well marked. Very important because when you drive down even the primary roads and there’s people driving campers that have never driven a wide vehicle especially on the Hogsback you will see nine out of ten are over the yellow line. You know the advantage is they go slow because they are afraid that either side you got a thousand foot drop off, but it’s really important you keep the primary roads marked. “*

*“Spur roads narrow and unpaved and slows people down”*

*“I know what I prefer is relatively undeveloped. But it makes more sense to me to have gravel than natural if you’re expecting a lot of people - otherwise people just tear up the landscape getting around. I think the quality of road services is important just to contain the damage. But I really hate seeing a stripped road that’s accessing the perimeter. What conflicts me is I want to get more people to appreciate this kind of landscape. So, how do you get them out safely?”*

*“When county paves roads, safety declines.”*

### **Secondary Roads**

After discussing the relative merits of several primary road options, participants were asked to compare a second set of three images depicting various levels of road development for secondary roads. The three images provided for the secondary road question are shown in Figure 17 and included:

- Photo 1 – A natural surface road – regularly maintained
- Photo 2 – A natural surface road - periodically maintained (every few years)
- Photo 3 – A natural surface two-track road - maintained only by use

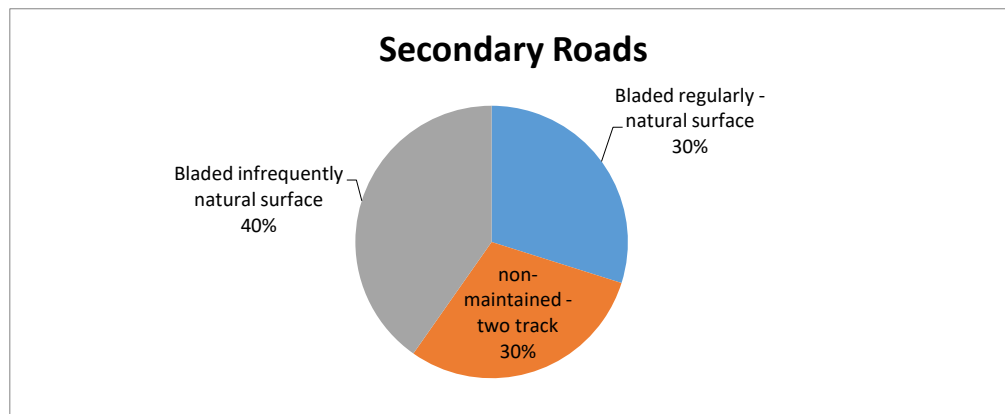
Figure 17: Secondary Road Development Preference Images



**Which of these do you prefer as a secondary road?**

Participants could select only one option when asked, “Which road do you prefer as a secondary road when traveling through or going to recreate in the study area?” Figure 18 shows the number of participants who selected each choice.

Figure 18: Secondary Road Development Preferences





The selections made by the participants do not reveal a clear pattern as they were fairly evenly split between the three options with Road 3 - natural surface, maintained only by use at 40%; Road 1 - natural surface road, regularly maintained at 30%; and Road 2 - natural surface, periodically maintained at 30%; With such an evenly matched set of preferences it is important to try to understand why participants made the selections they did through the comments. A few comments offered in clarification of their choices suggest a variety of issues that influenced their decision-making.

*“The rougher the road the better going out. Simply because it’s a visual cue to people who aren’t from this area that it isn’t Kansas anymore. This is what we think of as a road, this is what you need to be able to navigate. It’s a hint that if you get out of your car and start walking that you are kind of on your own. So, if you get a flat, you’re on your own and that’s your visual cue to people who aren’t from here.*”

*“Well, in Wyoming I had an old-timer that worked with me and would say, ‘I like that one because a horse could eat as it goes down the middle of the road.’”*

While these comments offer more insight into the rationale for the split choice on this question of secondary road preferences, the results are far from conclusive other than the need for a diversity of options when traveling through this landscape.

#### Management Boundaries

There are many different administrative units (BLM, NPS, USFS, state land, etc.) in the study area and it is often easy to cross from one jurisdiction to another without being aware. To better understand the challenges and opportunities this presents participants were asked if they were aware when crossing boundaries in the area. If they responded yes, they were also asked to explain whether crossing a boundary influenced their behavior, expectations or perceptions. Sample responses are provided by theme:

#### **Theme #1 – Management Approaches and Regulations**

The following is a sample of some of the comments that were made related to different management approaches and regulations.

*“I think I am aware when I am crossing boundaries but that’s just because I have worked for the National Park Service my whole career. I don’t think the general public has any clue what piece of property they are on and it doesn’t really change their expectations because unless they have had a lot of experience with individual agencies, it’s not very clear.”*

*“You have to know where you are because the regulations are different and if you are on private land versus government land versus what type of government land, it all makes a difference.”*

*“As an outfitter, they have to know where they are, because there’s different permit. What’s really nice, really convenient is a one permit system between Glen Canyon and the Monument and that’s a good thing.”*

#### **Theme #2– Signage on the ground**

Others were concerned that the lack of on the ground signage identifying boundaries might lead to confusion and a diminished recreational experience. For example:

*“For me, my expectations do change because I know a little bit more about their management policies. Of course, there has to be a sign, because I don’t normally keep track of where I am.”*

*“I got ticketed once for accidentally crossing into the park and spending the night, it was my fault but it makes a difference to know.”*

### **Theme #3– Private Property**

Several participants expressed a desire to respect private land while others see private land as a barrier to access, as the following comments indicate.

*“Knowing you were on private land, you wouldn’t want to camp there.”*

*“ For me, like the BLM and the National Forest Service all blend together for me, but private land - when you hit a private sign or ‘keep out’ or whatever or barb wire fences. My attitude changes and I won’t go on it. There’s definitely a boundary there.”*

### **Theme #4– Condition of the Landscape Differs**

Finally, a few comments were directed toward the condition of the landscape that is often a result of management practices, or activities allowed on some lands and not others.

*“My example is yesterday. I’m driving through Hanksville and BLM lands and then I go through the Capital Reef and I don’t see as much damage to the resources. Yes, there’s more protection and there’s more regulations, but it’s in better condition. When I look at the difference, there’s just not as much damage.”*

### **Wilderness Study Area Boundaries**

Another boundary related question addresses crossing into Wilderness Study Areas (WSA) in the region. Participants were asked if they were aware when they crossed WSA boundaries and if it influenced their expectations, perceptions or actions. The responses to this open-ended question surfaced a wide variety of perspectives on the topic of wilderness, and the management actions associated with WSAs in the area. The following samples of comments identify the issues to emerge from this conversation.

Many participants commented on how difficult it was to determine where the boundaries are, or even to be aware of them at all. But if they were aware of the boundaries, they liked them. The following comments capture a flavor of the conversations.

*“Only if you see a sign where it’s marked unless you’re really savvy with the maps, it does make a difference because I’m interested in the protection of those lands.”*

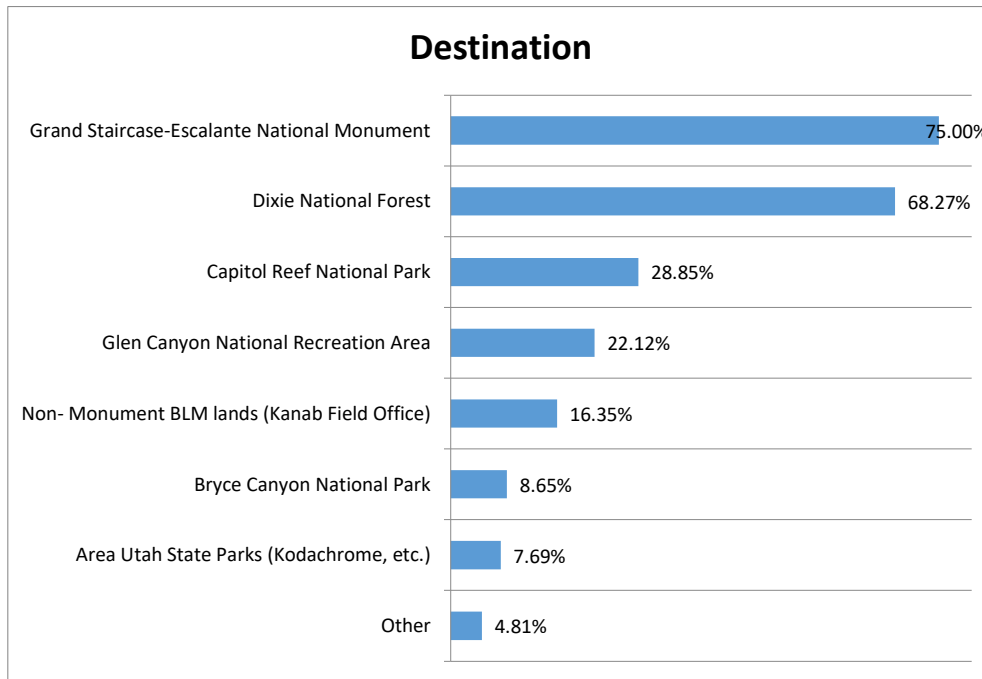
*“I’m always grateful when I see a sign. So that I know that area is being considered.”*

**When choosing to recreate in the area, where do you spend the most time?**

One of the remarkable aspects of the area studied in this phase is the context of the larger landscape the Monument is located in. In addition to the world-class public lands and recreational opportunities in the study area, other regional destinations include Zion National Park to the west; Capitol Reef National Park and Glen Canyon National Recreation Area to the east and northeast; Bryce Canyon National Park and Dixie National Forest to the north and northwest; and nearby Utah State Parks including Kodachrome Basin and Escalante Petrified Forest.

With so many recreational opportunities and amazing landscapes near the study area, it is important to understand how these different destinations relate to each other in providing recreation opportunities for local as well as visiting recreationists. To better understand where people spend the most time when recreating in the area, participants were provided a list of regional destinations, including “other”. They could select several options with the clicker and they could also explain their choices through comments. Figure 19 shows the selections made, most participants selected more than one destination. GSENM was the most common destination (75%). The second most popular destination among the participants was the Dixie National Forest (68.3%). Capitol Reef National Park and Glen Canyon National Recreation Area were also popular destinations in the area (28% and 22% respectively). Non-designated BLM lands in the area were the fourth most commonly selected destination (16.3%).

Figure 19: Primary Destination(s)



Participants indicated a variety of factors that would influence their decision on what destination they chose to recreate at, including seasons, who they are with, crowding, regulations, and accessibility.

### [Services](#)

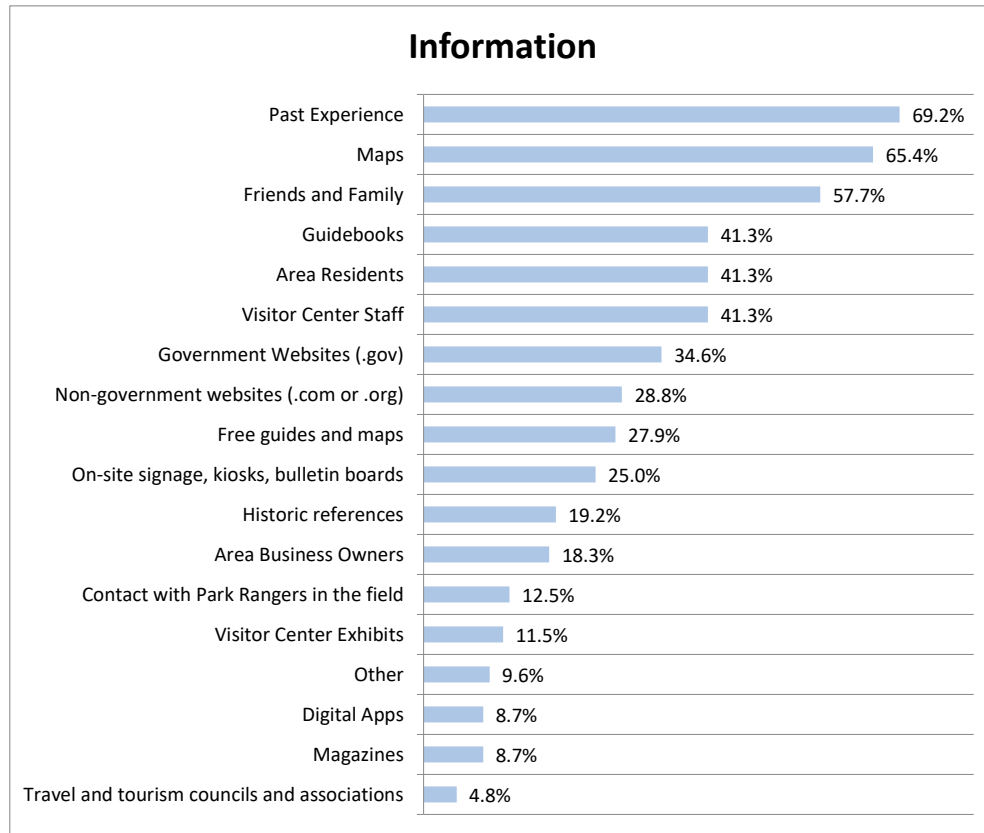
When individuals recreate on public lands they are concerned about the outcomes and experiences that they desire, the activities they want to participate in, and the setting characteristics that make all those possible, but they are also reliant on the provision of services that make their experiences possible. These services typically range from information to fuel, food to gear, and accommodations to communications. While BLM does not provide many of the services needed by recreationists using the area, the agency does need to understand what services are necessary for visitors and local residents to be successful when recreating in the study area and on adjacent public lands. The data about services allows BLM staff to engage in dialogue with business owners, community leaders, and residents to develop partnerships that enhance the livelihood and well-being of the local communities and supports visitor needs. The conversations that arise from these "practical partnerships" between the BLM and the service providers are one of the best values of this study. Done well, these will strengthen the ties of local residents, community leaders, and business owners to the landscapes surrounding their gateway communities.

Participants were asked several questions to prompt discussion about the kinds of services that are needed to be successful when they recreate in the study area and where those services are located. Their responses and a selection of clarifying comments follow.

### [Information Sources for the Study Area](#)

The first set of services almost every recreationist relies on to be successful is quality information. The participants were asked, "*Which sources of information do you depend upon to plan your recreation in the study area?*" and could choose more than one response from the prepared list. Figure 20 contains the percentage of participants that chose a specific response.

Figure 20: Sources of information about study area

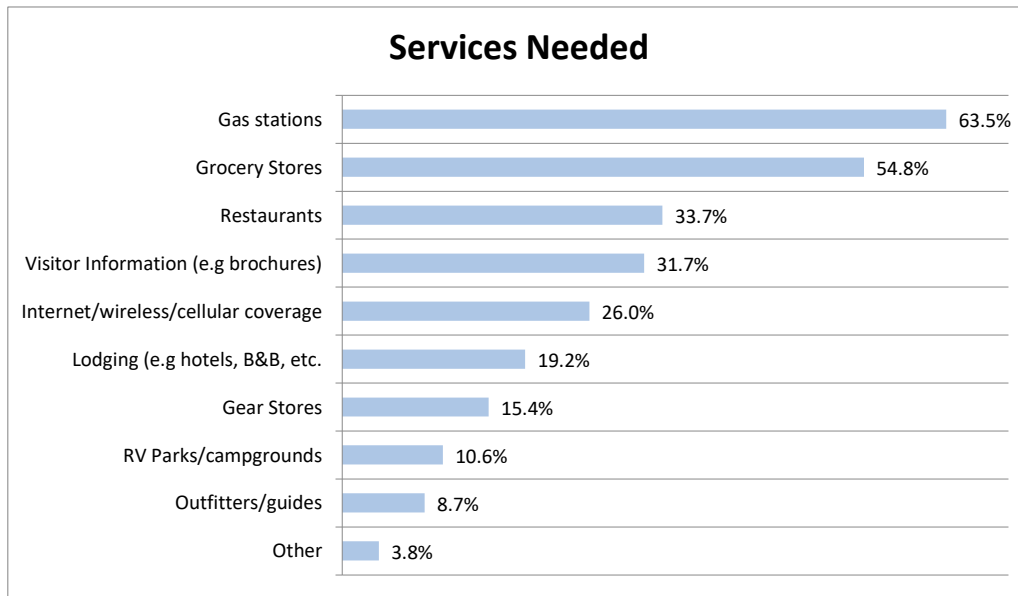


As one might expect, past experiences (69.2%), and maps (65.4%) remain very important sources of information about the area for over half of the participants. These sources of information seem to be complimented by personal interaction and perspectives with family and friends (57.7%), area residents (41.3%), guidebooks (41.3%), and visitor center staff (41.3%). It is worth noting the important role that the information provided by BLM plays in the preparation and successful recreation experience in the study area. Not only did nearly half the participants identify the visitor center staff as sources of information, they also indicated government websites (34.6%), on-site kiosks (25%), and even occasional contacts with rangers in the field (12.5%) all contributed to having a successful recreational experience. Digital information seems to be playing a growing role as a source of information. A significant number of participants indicated the usefulness of websites (34.6% using government websites and 28.8% using non-government websites) in their preparation.

### Other services needed for successful recreation experiences

To measure the other services that participants depended on, they were asked “*What services do you depend on to have a successful recreational experience?*” and to select as many responses from the prepared list as were applicable. These services range from gas to groceries and gear to accommodations. It is important to note that BLM is not planning on offering most or any of these services, but BLM planning efforts require that the agency understand the interactions between recreational users of public lands and the surrounding communities. “Practical partnerships” between BLM and service providers can result from this understanding and provide support for the provision of quality recreational experiences on public lands. Figure 21 shows the percentage of total participants selecting each of the services.

Figure 21: Services Needed

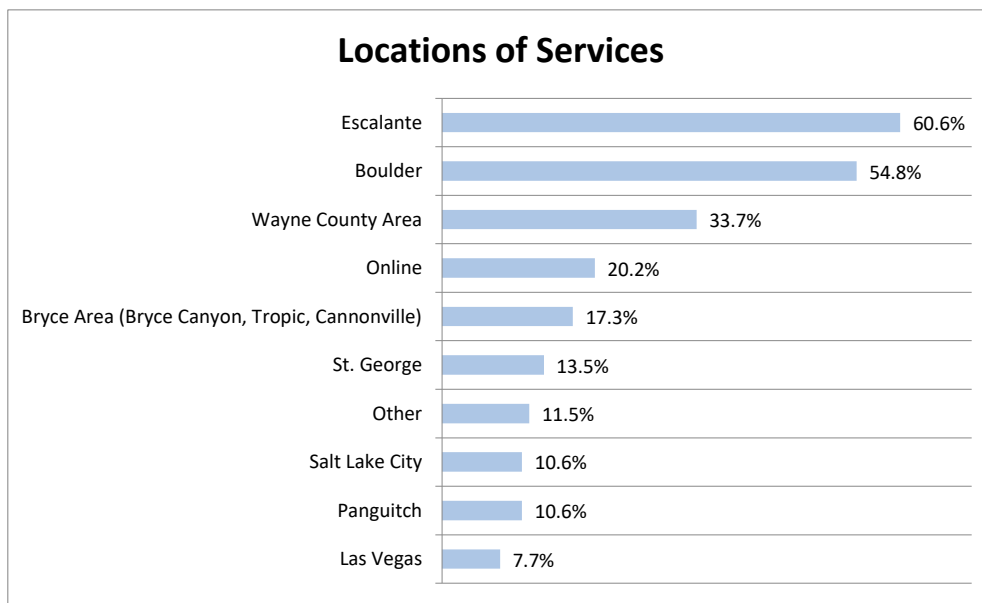


As one might expect, gas stations were the most common selection (63.5%) followed by grocery stores (54.8%), restaurants (33.7%) and visitor information (31.7%). Wireless/cellular coverage (26%) is a useful service according to some, but others were concerned that more consistent cell service will bring more visitors. Accommodations were split between RV parks / campgrounds at 10.6% and lodging (hotels, B&Bs, etc.) at 19.2%. 15.4% of participants selected gear stores, and 8.7% selected outfitters and guides. What is most notable about these responses to services needed is that they are all substantially lower than most previous phases of the study, particularly Phase 3 along Highway 89. Additional comments by participants suggest they also rely on services not listed such as GPS devices and Google Earth/Google Maps applications.

### Where those services are located

The real power of a discussion of services that participants depend on is to combine it with the location of those services, so we can better understand that dimension of the relationship between the gateway communities and the public lands surrounding them. Once again participants were encouraged to offer comments as well as consider a list of several of the communities from which they might obtain services. They could choose as many locations as they thought essential. Figure 22 shows the number of total selections for any particular location to obtain services.

Figure 22– Location of Services



When asked about where the services are located that participants depend on for recreational support in the study area it is apparent the significant role played by the gateway communities of *Escalante* (60.6%), *Boulder* (54.8%) and the *Bryce Area* (*Bryce Canyon, Tropic and Cannonville*) (17.3%). For some services, participants moved beyond the immediate gateway communities to find services in *Wayne County* (33.7%), *on-line* shopping (20.2%) and even *St. George, Utah* (13.5%). Some participants selected *other* (20.2), although far fewer participants shared with us what those “other” locations might be. Those that did named Kanab, Utah most often. From these responses it appears that recreation in the study area provides an important contribution to the local tourist economy in the gateway communities proximate to the Monument and a spill-over economic effect on other communities in the region.

### Missing Services

When asked what services were missing that hinder the participant’s ability to have a successful recreational experience in the study area, the most common response was that there are no missing services. Other responses indicate the need for information from signage to updates on resource and road conditions and

more services in the off-season. The following comments offer a sample of the suggestions for services that are currently missing in the area in order to have a successful recreation experience.

*“For me you have everything you need to have successful experience. You don’t have everything you would in a city, but there’s enough. It’s plenty.”*

*“I don’t want anymore. It’s like here you complain about the cellphone service, but it’s not a big thing. You can’t have this quality of life and have everything like Bryce Canyon. It’s a very special lifestyle here. It’s just a concept.”*

*“Information about what’s available. I always want to know more about where I am.”*

*“If it’s a delicate spring, you can have a sign telling them not to set foot on this area. Otherwise, without a sign, people are going to jump right in the water. But it’s hard too with a sign because pretty soon you’ll see someone’s initials right across it.”*

*“Off season months sometimes things are closed.”*

### Most Recent Visit - Expectations and Surprises

The final discussion in the focus groups centered on the participants’ memories of their most recent visit to the study area. They were asked to comment on whether that last visit met their expectations and whether they were surprised by anything. Of course, the most important element of this discussion was their response to the follow up question, "Why?"

Based on their responses, the area is generally meeting or exceeding expectations as evidenced by these comments which are typical of many expressed about the area and its ability to surprise and delight.

*“My last so to speak, on the river, I noticed it was really crowded. I did see a lot of people coming in and out. I saw families and I thought that was really neat. I enjoyed seeing people connected to this place and young people, college kids.”*

*“ It was nothing what I expected. We parked off a road, a nice graded road. We took a walk out along the flats and then all of a sudden, the canyons opened up and I was not expecting that. That was a big surprise. It was beautiful.”*

*“Usually expect people and bad roads; instead great roads and only road crew.”*

*“It met my expectations. I didn’t find anything surprising or unexpected. It was pretty much the same as the prior time I had been out there.”*

### Conclusions:

After analysis of the responses from 104 participants in 16 focus groups over seven (7) months of data collection in 2016, the following conclusions began to emerge regarding the study area. The following



observations are based on the responses and comments participants offered to the questions in the focus groups.

- Numerous participants throughout the focus group study indicated that one of the most important qualities of this landscape is its uniqueness. Many comments suggest that this place is like no other they have encountered. The participants point to several qualities which contribute to this uniqueness including: geologic features found nowhere else in the world, outstanding scenery, a diversity of recreational opportunities and settings, and significant seasonal variation in location and opportunity for recreation throughout the study area.
- Many participants identified iconic locations such as Calf Creek Campground and Trail as ideal locations to develop and maintain recreational resources because of their accessibility, beauty, and safety for visitors who might be less familiar with the more rugged parts of the landscape and the demands it places on visitors. They often expressed pleasure in “sharing” these places with the visitors to the area and seeing them enjoy the landscape in the front-country.
- Some participants identified the economic potential for gateway communities that provide a wide-range of services to support recreation in the study area. With the designation of Highway 12 as an all-American highway and the recent “Mighty Five” campaign highlighting national parks in Utah, the study area has been experiencing increased visitor usage by tourists who rely on local services from the surrounding communities. While this has helped the local economy, it has also created the opportunity for more clashes between the visitors and local residents. Several participants expressed a desire to develop plans to ensure these clashes don’t diminish the experience of recreation or quality of life in the area for locals and visitors alike.
- With 1.9 million acres in GSENM, a significant contributing factor to the overall experience of the study area is the enormous scale of the vast open spaces in the landscape. This large-scale setting allows for more dispersed recreation that supports the values of solitude and privacy, and remoteness as well as the outcomes associated with tranquil escape which was one of the most popular interest and expectations selected by participants.
- Participants seemed to make a strong distinction between activities and expectations of crowding etc. based on where the place was in the study area. They identified the area along the paved roads (such as Highway 12 and the Burr Trail) as front country where they would expect more visitors, and even enjoyed seeing visitors discovering the wonder of the landscape. Areas further from the roads were identified as back country areas where they hoped to have more of a solitude experience without a lot of visual or auditory reminders of the presence of other humans.
- Most participants also commented on and selected values associated with the wild, natural and rugged characteristics of the landscape. These values allow for the attainment of recreational outcomes associated with the interest and expectation of natural landscapes which is the most preferred selection among all participants as well as the interest and expectation of self-reliant adventures which has appeal to many of the participants who identified as local residents. These

values even impacted the ideas of several participants regarding their preferences on the types of roads in the area as they suggested that a less developed road would fit the characteristic of the landscape much better.

- The mode of transportation to encounter the landscape is always a consideration when managing public lands for recreation or other values. While the most popular selection for activity was hiking/walking/running which would indicate that much of this landscape is approached on foot. Often other modes of transportation are used in combination with hiking and walking, so a participant might use a vehicle for initial access then continue deeper into the landscape on foot. There was concern expressed by “quiet users” about the noise and resource damage that can come with ATV and 4x4 traffic, however, most participants supported the idea that the landscape is so large that it can (and should) accommodate all these modes of transportation in the study area.
- There was a larger expressed concern for the effects of livestock grazing on the landscape in this study area than some of the previous phases of the project. While several participants expressed an appreciation of the traditional uses of the landscape including grazing, many others were concerned that the livestock use, particularly in riparian areas, was contributing to a degradation of the resources, and a diminishment of the recreational experiences they were looking for.
- One of the major management tools to maintain characteristics of the landscape is the ability to assign a number to the total visitor count in an area, and the group size in an area. The fact that every focus group responded to a numeric question in the photo section by suggesting “it depends on...” might cause one to rethink some of those prescriptions.
- The natural landscapes and tranquil escapes opportunities are the overwhelming preferred qualities to be maintained in study area.

The final research in this six-year study will include an additional phase that will take a comparative look at all four areas of the Monument covered in earlier phases. A final report, released in the fall of 2018, will identify a recreational baseline of desired outcomes across the entire Grand Staircase Escalante National Monument, with emphasis on unique qualities of one or more regions.

Grand Staircase-Escalante National Monument

**Recreation Experience Baseline Study  
Phase 4**

HWY 12  
Burr Trail



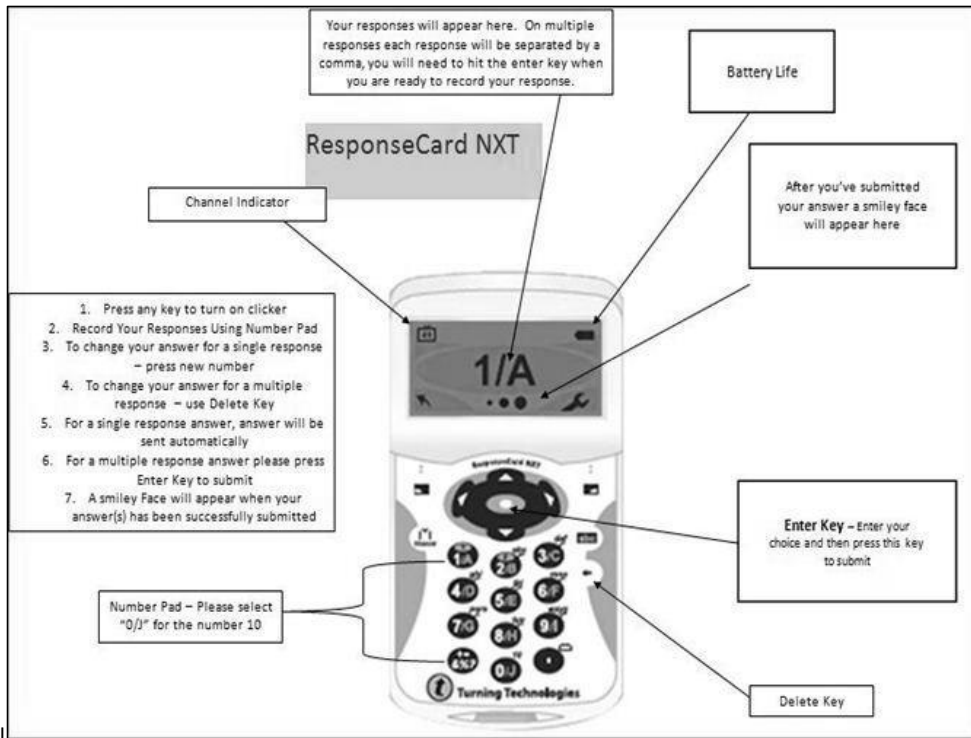
**Tim Casey, PhD**

Natural Resource Center - Colorado Mesa University

2016

**Participants:**

- ✓ Listen, contribute, and stay focused on the subject at hand
- ✓ Feel free to keep or change your opinions in response to what you hear
- ✓ Respect others' right to share their thoughts; do not interrupt
- ✓ The moderator will stop anyone who attempts to block another's views
- ✓ Feel free to get up, obtain refreshments, or visit the restroom
- ✓ Do not engage in separate, private discussions
- ✓ Remember, participation is voluntary on all questions



*To ensure that we all can use the clickers to help record your preferences throughout the focus group, let's try them now.*

**1. Would you start by entering your home zip-code when the slide is available and the polling bar in the corner of the slide is green.**

*To submit your response, select the enter key in the center of the arrows. You should see a smiley face at the bottom of your screen, if your response has been received.*

**2. Which of the following choices best describes your primary association with the study area?**

<input type="checkbox"/>	Visitor
<input type="checkbox"/>	Local Resident
<input type="checkbox"/>	Community Leader (elected / non-elected)
<input type="checkbox"/>	Outfitter/Guide
<input type="checkbox"/>	Business owner
<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

**3. What are the qualities of the study area that make it special for you?**

**3. What are the qualities of the study area that makes it a special place for you?  
(Choose up to five.)**

<b>SP-1</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>It's my back yard</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>It's where I spend quality time with friends and family</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Historic qualities</b> - how previous generations used the area
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Productive qualities</b> - grazing and hunting
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Biological resources</b> - plants, animals, etc.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Physical resources</b> - geology, paleontology, etc.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Cultural resources</b> - archeology, etc.
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Scenic quality</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Spiritual and/or religious qualities</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Sense of freedom</b>
<b>SP-2</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Wild, unspoiled, and natural</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Remote and rugged</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Sense of solitude and privacy</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Natural quietness</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Dark night skies</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Sense of discovery/learning opportunities</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Dogs and/or horses are allowed</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Lack of development or improvements</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>It's where I engage in recreational activities I enjoy</b>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<b>Other</b>

**Discussion:**

**4. What could or does diminish the specialness for you?**

**4. What could or does diminish the specialness for you? (Choose up to five.)**

<b>DIM-1</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Additional fees, permits, or restrictions
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Increased use and crowding
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Increased traffic and/or increase use of a wider array of vehicles
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Group size limits I consider to be too high
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Group size limits I consider to be too low
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Limitations on historic uses and productive qualities
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Additional facilities and improvements
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of facilities and improvements
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Increased access
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Limited access
<b>DIM-2</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Vandalism, litter, graffiti, and/or human waste
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Damage to soils and vegetation
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of solitude and privacy
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Noise
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Artificial light
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Livestock or evidence of them
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Culture clashes – locals vs. visitors or long time locals vs. move-ins
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lack of connection to or education about place
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Residential or industrial development (utility lines, pipelines, etc.)
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

**Discussion:**



**5. At the places you enjoy visiting has use increased or decreased in the last five (5) years?**

1. Strongly Decreased	2. Slightly Decreased	3. No Change	4. Slightly Increased	5. Strongly Increased
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**6. If use at that these places has changed in the last five (5) years, has it been for the better or worse?**

1. Much worse	2. Somewhat worse	3. No change	4. Somewhat better	5. Much better
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**Why?**

**7. Are there particular places that are most important to you? Why are these areas particularly special?**

(Please write your clicker number, the names of these places, and why they are special on the sticky notes provided and place them on the general location of the area large map.)

**8. When you go to your areas of interest, which of these phrases best captures your interests and expectations for going there? (Choose up to 3.)**

<b>CS-1</b>	<b>Natural Landscapes</b>	I like to surround myself with the beauty of open space and the wildness of mountains, forests, rangeland, water and wildlife
	<b>Rural Landscapes</b>	I want to connect with the visual landscapes, sense of place and pace of rural areas where people make their living from the land
	<b>Cultural &amp; Heritage History</b>	I am interested in how historic and prehistoric peoples lived in the area, and in exploring the connections I have with those peoples
	<b>Natural History &amp; Science</b>	I am interested in knowing about natural processes in this area and the study of the scientific value of the landscape for enhancing our understanding of the world around us.
	<b>Health &amp; Fitness</b>	I like being able to regularly access public lands recreation areas that help me get and stay fit or improve my mental well-being
	<b>Self-Reliant Adventure</b>	I prefer outdoor adventure on my own that challenges my outdoor skills, improves my abilities, and maybe even involves some risk
<b>CS-2</b>	<b>Tranquil Escapes</b>	I look forward to the quiet serenity of getting away from it all for some mental and physical relaxation, reflection, and renewal
	<b>Youth, Family &amp; Friends</b>	I am enriched by socializing with others: young people, my family and/or friends and enjoying companionship in the outdoors together
	<b>Community Life</b>	I like seeing what the discovery and enjoyment of nearby open space recreation does for my community and our visiting guests
	<b>Economic Well-being</b>	I want to see public lands recreation areas contributing in a significant way to our economic livelihood
	<b>Learning &amp; instructing</b>	I feel comfortable having others equip and enable me to do recreation and tourism outings—or being part of helping others learn how to do that
	<b>Stewardship &amp; Caretaking</b>	I like giving back to the outdoors from what I've received by helping care for special sites and facilities so others can also enjoy them



**9. When visiting those areas, what activities do you engage in most often? (Choose up to 3.)**

<b>Act-1</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Scenic Driving
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Exploring or discovering new areas
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hiking/Walking/Running
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Backpacking
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Car Camping
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Picnicking
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Rock Climbing/Canyoneering
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Nature Study (wildlife viewing/ bird watching/geology/plants)
	<input type="checkbox"/>	4x4 Driving (Jeep, truck, SUV)
	<input type="checkbox"/>	ATV/UTV riding
<b>Act-2</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bicycling/ Mountain Biking
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Horseback Riding
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Family or Group Activities (civic groups, clubs, scouts, church, historic reenactments, etc.)
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Ranching activities
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Hunting
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Photography
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Learning activities (interpretive programs, educational outings, etc.)
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Art/Writing activities
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Spiritual renewal activities
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

**10. Do you recreate in these areas primarily because:**

<input type="checkbox"/>	The <b>PLACES</b> are inherently special to me
<input type="checkbox"/>	These areas allow me to engage in a favored <b>ACTIVITY</b>
<input type="checkbox"/>	Both <b>PLACE</b> and <b>ACTIVITY</b> are important to me

**11. Photos & Preference:** The next set of slides show images from the area of study. The images depict settings and travel routes in this region and we will use those to discuss your preferences.

**12a. When traveling in the area of study are you aware when you travel across administrative boundaries (BLM, NPS, USFS, private land, state land, etc.)?**

**If so, how does that influence what you do, your expectations, or your perceptions?**

**12b. When traveling in the area of study are you aware when you go into and out of Wilderness Areas or Wilderness Study Areas?**

**If so, how does that influence what you do, your expectations, or your perceptions?**

**13. When choosing where to recreate in this region, where do you spend the most time? (Choose up to 3.)**

Dest-1	<input type="checkbox"/>	Grand Staircase- Escalante National Monument
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non- Monument BLM lands (Kanab Field Office)
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Dixie National Forest
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bryce Canyon National Park
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Capitol Reef National Park
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Glen Canyon National Recreation Area
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Area Utah State Parks (Kodachrome, Escalante Petrified Forest, etc.)
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

**14. Which sources of information do you depend upon to plan your recreation in the region? (Choose all that apply.)**

S-1	<input type="checkbox"/>	Friends and family
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Past experience
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Area business owners
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Area residents
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Visitor Center staff
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Contact with park rangers in the field
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Visitor Center exhibits
	<input type="checkbox"/>	On-Site signage, kiosks, bulletin boards
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Travel and tourism councils and associations
S-2	<input type="checkbox"/>	Magazines
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Free guides and maps
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Guidebooks
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Government websites - .gov
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Non-government websites - .com or .org
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Digital apps
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Historic references
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Maps (topographic, National Geographic, etc.)
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other

**15. What services do you depend on to have a successful recreational experience? (Choose all that apply.)**

<b>Services- 1</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gas stations
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Gear stores
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Grocery stores
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Lodging (e.g. hotels, B&B's, etc.)
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Outfitters/guides
	<input type="checkbox"/>	RV parks/campgrounds
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Restaurants
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Visitor information (e.g. brochures)
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Internet/wireless/cellular coverage
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other
	<input type="checkbox"/>	

**16. Where are those services located? (Choose all that apply.)**

<b>Services- 2</b>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Bryce Area (Bryce Canyon City, Tropic, Cannonville, etc.)
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Escalante
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Boulder
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Wayne County Area (Torrey, Teasdale, Loa, etc.)
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Panguitch
	<input type="checkbox"/>	St. George
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Las Vegas
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Salt Lake City
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Online
	<input type="checkbox"/>	Other
	<input type="checkbox"/>	



**17. Are there services that are missing that prevent you from having a successful experience?**

**18. Did your last recreational outing in the study area meet your expectations? Why or why not?**

**19. What was the most surprising thing about your visit compared to what you expected?**

*We appreciate your involvement in this important focus group.*

*Your input is an important part of maintaining an ongoing inventory of our recreational users' preferences, expectations, and concerns.*

*Contact Information:*

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## Appendix 2 – BLM Recreational Setting Characteristic Matrix

Figure 23 – Land Use Planning ROS matrix

Every Recreation Setting Can be Described:		By the Variation Within...		Setting Classes					
		...its Component Attributes		Primitive	Back Country	Middle Country	Front Country	Rural Country	Urban
BIO-PHYSICAL:	a. Remoteness:								
	b. Naturalness:								
	c. Facilities:								
SOCIAL:	d. Group Size:								
	e. Contacts:								
	f. Evidence of Use:								
OPERATIONAL:	g. Visitor Services:								
	h. Management Controls:								
	i. Travel Mode:								